



THREE SCORE YEARS & TEN

THE
LANCASHIRE
AERO CLUB

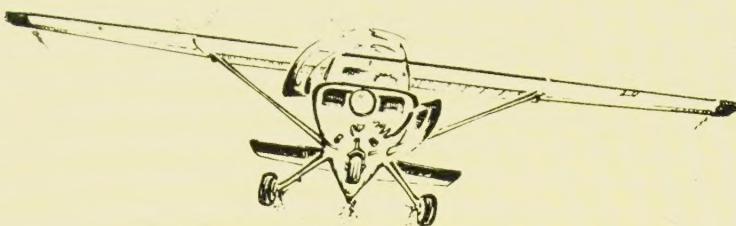
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PETER MAHER



Lancashire Aero Club

Est. 1922

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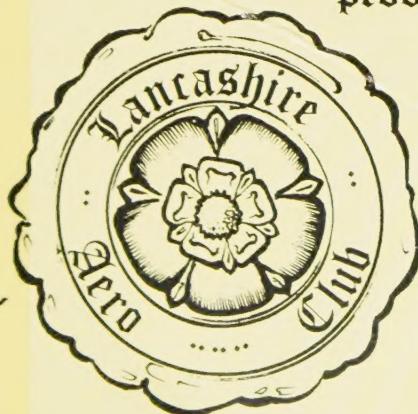
Oyez, Oyez, Oyez, . . .

Be it known to all Citizens of this Realm & to every bird, fish and ground-bound, creeping beastie, that on this auspicious day, ye 21st of July, 1922 anno domini, ye undermentioned

... Peter Maher ...

hath completed a memorable First Solo Flight in an aerial carriage of ye type Cessna 152 marked H.B.H.C. and that this document shall mark ye Skill, Precision & Daring of ye aforesaid soul ... who undaunted & untarnished, hath clattered off into ye firmament, entirely circumnavigating ye airfield, and hath alighted safely proving the age of miracles not to be dead !!!

So witnessed by my hand ...
unstable though it be ,



... Don Graham.

Chief Instructor of Aerial Carriagery.

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THE LANCASHIRE AERO CLUB

Three Score Years
and Ten
1922-1992

Compiled by Peter Maher

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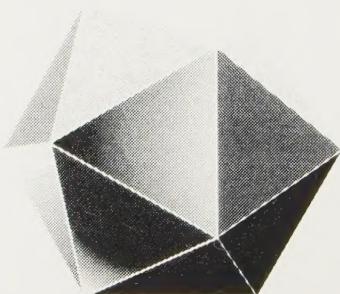
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Front Cover - As part of the Seventieth Birthday celebrations of the Lancashire Aero Club, British Aerospace sent their original de Havilland Moth G-EBLV to revisit Woodford and Barton. The Club got its first Moth in 1925, this was their second. Seen here at the Press Day prior to the 1992 Manchester Airshow at Barton. Parked alongside is Club Member, Rowan Stephen's Tiger Moth, G-ANKZ. In the background can be seen Barton's Control Tower which is almost as ancient; now a Grade Two listed building, it is thought to be the oldest working tower in the World. (Paul Tomlin)

Inside Front Cover - The Annual 'Wings' Dinner-Dance has become the Lancashire Aero Club's social highlight of the year when the Club Trophies, Wings and Solo-Certificates are traditionally presented to the proud and deserving recipients.

Inside Back Cover and Facing Page - Plan of Barton Aerodrome, then and now..

Back Cover - (Top) Barton captured through a 'fish-eye' lens, taken from the Spartan Arrow, G-ABWP. Seen heading West from left to right are the Manchester Ship Canal, the A57 and the M62 Motorway. (Paul Tomlin)
(Bottom) Barton on Airshow Day. The active runway has to be the very short 06/24 to allow for maximum car parking space on the remainder of the airfield. In the background, the Barton Flyover carries the M63 Motorway over the Manchester Ship Canal.

Foreword

Dutton Manor
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1992

It was only four years after the R.A.F. was officially formed in April 1918, from a branch of the Army, that the Lancashire Aero Club was founded. I was born in the very same year, so the Club and I have now reached the great "Seven O" together. Man's life is but a 'Twinkling of the Eye' - But what a Twinkle ! I consider myself fortunate to be able to count my life span with the age of the Club. This renowned Flying Club has had connections with more famous flying people than I ever imagined possible and Barton has become a jewel in the Mancunian Crown.

During the Club's first 39 years I was growing up and introduced to flying in the thirties by taking pleasure flights with Cobham's famous Flying Circus. Loving it so much, I joined the R.A.F. during the Second World War and stayed on afterwards to finish my service career by testing aircraft equipment at Farnborough. Having become a flying instructor in 1950 I naturally wished to continue my teaching skills afterwards and in 1961 I sought out the Lancashire Aero Club in preference to other flying clubs in Lancashire, because of its high maintenance standards.

With my memory of this Club going back to 1961 I can only mention but a few of the wonderful people I have had the pleasure to know: My predecessor, Life President Basil Meads, who regularly used to judge the landing competitions along with Dennis Armitage, who had also been Chairman and President. Also the other Basil - Basil Carlin whose aircraft maintenance was so superb along with Tommy Richardson. The late 'Charlie' Rollo who was the CFI when I joined at Christmastime 1961; Jean Vassie and Alf' Young who watched after the money matters so well. Jack Parncutt the groundsman who lived in the house on the airfield. Talking to him was like living history, as with Sandy Jacks in maintenance. Not forgetting the famous racing pilot Fred Dunkerley and one of the longest surviving members Bob Ogden who still enjoys his flying to this day.

Looking through my Log Book I find that in 1970, I had the pleasure of teaching the grandson of Alan Goodfellow, who was one of the Club's earliest members. In 1974 I acquired the Examiner's Rating and in all a total of 112 members successfully passed their General Flying Tests with me starting with Mr Murray in the first year through to Mike Allcock ten years later.

I recommend this book to all flying enthusiasts as a wonderful record of the ups and downs of this Club where enthusiasm and business proficiency have perhaps not always gone hand in hand. Many times have seen the Club in financial troubles which somehow it has always managed to survive. The only answer is to keep the 'Kites' in the air. I sincerely hope that the amazing history of this Premier Aero Club will serve as an inspiration to all future aviators; that you all get airborne as much as possible and maybe exceed the 220 airfields around the Globe where I have landed.

My thanks go to the Author who has collated all the information. He and his wife have done a magnificent job and included some very amusing anecdotes. Also to all those other members I never had the privilege of meeting, who kept the Lancashire Aero Club to the forefront in its earlier history

A.T.DUGDALE

D.F.C. J.P.

Life President,
Lancashire Aero Club

Introduction

THE LANCASHIRE AERO CLUB -

‘Three Score Years and Ten’

The Lancashire Aero Club was founded in 1922 and therefore celebrates its seventieth anniversary this year. To many people, Lancashire Aero Club and Barton Aerodrome are synonymous, but each had its own chequered history before the two eventually came together. In fact, Barton Aerodrome was not officially opened until 1st January 1930 as Manchester's first Airport. The Lancashire Aero Club did not take up residence until much later.

This brief history has been compiled not only to celebrate the achievement of having reached this milestone but also to recognise the important role which the Lancashire Aero Club has played in the development of light aviation in this country. However the history of Barton could not be ignored or else the picture would be incomplete. In fact, it was the foresight of one of the founder members that led not only to the opening of this Aerodrome but subsequently Ringway/Manchester International Airport.

In the November 1991 edition of The Lancashire Aero Club's magazine (*The Elevator*), the Committee appealed to the members for somebody to take on the task of preparing an exhibition to be mounted in the clubhouse to coincide with the Summer 1992 'Fly-In'. It was hoped that pictures and memorabilia could be put on display to depict the seventy-year history of the Club.

Perhaps rather impetuously I decided to take on the task and immediately set about committing something to paper. My first intention was, in addition to the exhibition, to produce a potted history on a fly-sheet which could be distributed over the weekend to visiting pilots.

I remembered that I had a copy of a brochure, which along with the relevant information for any prospective trainee pilots, also gave a short history of the club. Furthermore, I also had a well worn copy of a book produced several years ago by a well known local aviation historian, Mr Brian Robinson entitled '*Aviation in Manchester*'.

Sadly Mr Robinson's masterpiece is no longer in print but fortunately he very graciously gave me permission to extract copy from his book. I was sure therefore that I could produce some form of reading material from these two works of reference.

Upon volunteering my services to the committee and showing them the dozen or so pages which I had produced on my home word processor (sorry - my wife's word processor) several folders, which were being held by the Chairman Cliff Mort, were handed to me as being possibly useful to my project. Closer investigation revealed a much more detailed history of the club's early years than I had so far produced. The folders had apparently come from the papers of our late President, Basil G. Meads and had been presented to the club by his widow 'Queenie'.

Among the contents were two articles written in 1956 by the founder and another member who joined the Club shortly after its formation. It was obvious that they were written with the intention of documenting the club's early history but had never been published. The founder of the club had in fact published a book in 1936 detailing many of his flying exploits and some of the text was a reproduction of his earlier work.

The information was so detailed that it could not be ignored. Furthermore the second article contained large extracts from early editions of *The Elevator* and gave a wonderful insight into the Club's early activities. Possibly none of these Newsletters survive and these extracts are now the only record of their contents.

My project was now taking on a much larger scale than I had so far envisaged. Brian Robinson had very skillfully put all his information down in a chronological order, including details on Barton Aerodrome. The other two writers had through their own experiences, provided considerable additional material.

My own writing skills bear no comparison with the eloquence of any of these writers. To merge all the pieces of work would have involved some re-writing which would not have done justice to their work. At the risk of some repetition, I present Chapter One, which is in the main an extract of Brian Robinson's book. Chapters 2 and 3 are the work of our forefathers.

It is particularly interesting to note that in the Second and Third Chapters both writers sometimes refer to themselves in the 'Third Person' but then seem to slip back into the 'First Person'. I have deliberately left these parts unchanged in order to reflect their originality.

Only when we move onto Part 4, 'After the Second World War' can I claim any credit (if any) for my own work. Considerable assistance was still necessary in gathering information. For some reason people did not commit events to paper quite so much as before the hostilities. For their help, guidance or merely taking the time to talk with me, I am particularly indebted to the following:-

David Ash, Clive Barron, Paul Bennison, Mike Bowden, Ken Brown, Tony Brown, Paul Connatty, Paul Crellin, Maureen Davie, Tom Dugdale, Dave Greenwood, Eliot Horwich, Madge Hackney, Alan Hough, Mike Howells, George Jenks, Norman Jones, Heather McGowan, Cliff Mort, Bob Ogden, Bill Pickersgill, Richard T.Riding, Brian Robinson, Alan Scholefield, John Seville, Tracy Shaw, Rowan Stephens, John Teece, Paul Tomlin, Roger Wareing.

Finally, I owe my sincere thanks to my dear wife Sheila who typed about 90% of this book. Proofing, encouragement and putting up with me engrossed in this project are also attributable to Sheila. In fact when I think about it, perhaps her name should appear on this book rather than my own.

Peter Maher
(1992)

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Chapter 1

An overview of the Development of the Lancashire Aero Club and Barton Aerodrome

In October 1917 The Manchester City Council were advised that The War Department proposed to build an airfield beside the railway line between Chorlton-cum-Hardy and Heaton Mersey stretching across what is now Hough End Playing Fields. The nearest railway station was Alexandra Park and the airfield was given the same name.

A number of hangars were erected and the field was big enough to receive the largest aircraft of the day. Both service and manufacturer's test flying was taking place including that of the famous A.V.Roe and Co. Ltd. (Otherwise known as AVRO which later became part of British Aerospace). However The Air Ministry's lease for the Aerodrome was only to last for a short term and flying ceased at the end of August 1924.

With the closure of Alexandra Park, A.V.Roe and Co. Ltd were forced to seek, quite literally, fresh fields and pastures - and they were not alone. For some time the aerodrome had been the home of a small glider owned by the Lancashire Aero Club which had stemmed from the efforts of a man who was to leave a considerable mark on a number of aspects of Manchester's civil aviation history.

John F. Leeming was born in Chorlton-cum-Hardy, Manchester and commenced to take an interest in aviation in the pre First World War days of his youth in Southport where he had followed the construction of models in various configurations, with the completion in 1910 of a 20ft. span monoplane and later three other gliders. None of these appear to have been strikingly successful but in 1922 Leeming still cherished an ambition to create aircraft and spurred on by reports of German glider pilots, he set about designing a glider which would not only provide a means of flying but which could be dismantled and stored in a garage.

Aware of the large quantities of surplus material held by some of the aircraft manufacturers, John Leeming, who had by then moved to Hale in Cheshire, contacted the nearest factory to his home and was received by John Lord who was sufficiently impressed by his enthusiasm to give him the run of the AVRO scrap-heap. Leeming was introduced to Tom Prince and Clement Wood and they quickly joined in the project, being followed shortly afterwards by a fitter, George Bayliss and a young businessman Mark Lacayo.

The glider was designated the LPW, taking the initials of the three founders of the small group. Construction progressed, more slowly than some of the enthusiastic young men would have wished,

under the meticulous supervision of Tom Prince who combined his authority as an AVRO foreman with a strict regard for standards of accuracy and care in his spare time work. He was joined in this by a colleague from Newton Heath, Arthur Ainsworth, who many years later was to supervise the rebuilding of one of the last AVRO 504's, which is still flying with the Shuttleworth Collection.

The glider was moved from the garage of Leeming's home into his Greenhouse. At this stage the party of friends had risen to ten young men and one of these, Mark Lacayo suggested they form themselves into a club. Rules were drawn up, or rather copied with the necessary alterations, from the rule book of a local tennis club. So it was that The Lancashire Aero Club with ten members and a home made glider came into being in 1922.

It was not the first club to bear the name as the Blackpool flying meetings of 1909 and 1910 had been organised by a Lancashire Aero Club - but this did not survive the war. In 1919 efforts had been made to form a Lancashire Flying Club at Southport with help from pilots of the AVRO Transport Company but little seems to have come of it. An attempt to give that title to the new club was firmly rejected by Tom Prince who pointed out that there were already many "flying clubs" - nearly all associated with pigeon racing.

The glider was moved to Alexandra Park and made its first flight on 24th May 1924 being towed into the air at the end of a long rope attached to a car. The subsequent crashes of the glider and resulting publicity aroused interest and membership began to grow. Another glider was started and someone gave the club a "hotted up" motor cycle engine. This was installed into the original glider and an airscrew which was hoped would suit the engine was carved by two of the members.

The Lancashire Aero Club progressed apace, Lord Leverhulme accepting the Presidency and applied for affiliation to the Royal Aero Club but the closure of Alexandra Park proved a set-back and negotiations took place with a view to obtaining a new flying ground at West Timperley. However A.V.Roe and Co.Ltd. once again came to the club's aid and permitted the use of their new aerodrome at Woodford (in Cheshire!) where the LPW, fitted later with its Douglas engine made continuing efforts to take to the air. Never conspicuously successful either as a glider or with its diminutive engine, it was nonetheless the vehicle around which the first light aircraft club in the country was formed and the forerunner of a long line of aircraft owned by the club to the

present day.

In 1923 the Air Ministry, inspired it has been said, by what was going on near Manchester had announced a scheme to assist the formation of light aeroplane clubs. The scheme provided for a gift of two de Havilland Moths to each of five clubs and one hundred pounds paid to the club for each member who passed his or her tests for a Pilot's "A" Licence. The Lancashire Aero Club was already in being and was therefore included in the scheme.

On 18th November 1924, Alderman Sir William Kay presided at a meeting at the Midland Hotel Manchester, where John Leeming was also able to announce that an AVRO 504 had been donated to the Club. The two Moths turned out to be G-EBLR and G-EBLV, the latter of which is still flying more than sixty years after its delivery to Woodford. To celebrate the arrival of the second aircraft on 29th August 1925 a pageant was organised at the aerodrome.

Vast crowds were being attracted to the annual displays at Hendon but the general public in other parts of the country had few opportunities of seeing aircraft at close quarters. The Lancashire Aero Club was the first of its kind to perceive that many people would pay to see flying and some of them might well be impelled to seek flying instruction and membership of the Club.

A month later a more ambitious event saw 25,000 people at Woodford for a display which included Bristol Fighters and Sopwith Snipes of the Royal Air Force as well as numerous performances by well-known pilots and a race which attracted 18 entries. Turning points were at the Goyt Mill, Marple and the Knutsford Water Tower. The winner was Flight Officer H.R.D. Waghorn, later to represent Great Britain in the Schneider Trophy races.

By the beginning of 1926 the Club supplemented its two voluntary instructors, J.C. Cantrill and J.J. (Joe) Scholes, by engaging its first full-time instructor, Neville Stack, and obtained two new aircraft, the Moth, G-EBMQ presented by Sir Charles Wakefield, newly appointed Club President, and the AVRO Gosport, G-EBNF, presented by A.V. Roe and Co Ltd.

The mid-twenties saw some effort by Imperial Airways to establish passenger flying but this activity did not impinge on Manchester, nor did the area see much of the work which Trenchard was doing to re-organise the Royal Air Force. Apart from the gradual build-up of the Lancashire Aero Club and the struggles of A.V. Roe and Co Ltd to keep the aircraft industry alive in the North West, there was little to be seen of aviation in one of the country's greatest industrial regions.

Gradually the paucity of orders, which had followed the First World War, was receding and flying was beginning to attract the interest of the masses as more aircraft were seen about. In the later years of the nineteen twenties Manchester people read more of aviation in their papers and a gradually growing proportion of what they read

related to their own area. Two great protagonists of civil aviation Sir Sefton Brancker and Sir Alan Cobham were strong advocates of both the development of club flying and the opening of new aerodromes for the use of civil air transport and their views were echoed locally by John Leeming.

Within a week of landing on the Thames at Westminster, after a round trip to Australia in a D.H.50 for which he was knighted by King George V, Cobham flew to Manchester, landing at Woodford. He was flown from there to a hastily prepared landing ground at Old Hall Farm, Withington, during the afternoon of the 7th October 1926 in an aircraft of the Lancashire Aero Club piloted by Leeming with the two Moths flown by Cantrill and Scholes forming as escorts.

The city was celebrating the success of its Civic Week and Cobham was enthusiastically received by the Lord Mayor, Alderman Miles Mitchell, and a large crowd whom he addressed from the Town Hall steps. Here, and later at the University where he was made an Honorary Life Member of the Union, he advocated the setting up of more aerodromes for civil aviation, a call which was to find growing support in Manchester in the coming years.

Cobham's overseas flights had done much to set the public and the business world thinking and talking about flying and, as Director of Civil Aviation, Sir Sefton Brancker, sought every opportunity of furthering this process. In conversation during one of Leeming's visits to London he casually dropped the suggestion that excellent publicity would accrue from the successful landing and subsequent take-off of a light aircraft from the top of one of Britain's better-known mountains. Leeming at once took up the idea and immediately saw the possibility of linking publicity for Manchester aviation to publicity for a Manchester aircraft.

After some misgivings on the part of the manufacturers, it was agreed that a lightened AVRO Gosport could be made available and that the chosen aircraft would be fitted with the new experimental 90 hp AVRO Alpha radial engine. First plans were for a landing at the summit of Snowdon but it was decided that conditions there were such that even the sturdy Gosport was unlikely to survive the attempt and Helvellyn was chosen. The Works Manager, Roy Dobson, set about the preparation of the aircraft registered G-EBPH, and it was agreed that Bert Hinkler would accompany Leeming in another aircraft.

After the failure of a preliminary attempt due to adverse weather conditions, the landing was finally achieved on the 22nd December 1926 and in the event, Hinkler flew with Leeming in the Gosport as the aircraft which he had intended to use was unserviceable. To Leeming's surprise, he found on the summit a Professor of Greek who readily agreed to sign a scribbled certificate to provide evidence of the landing. A successful take-off was made over Striding Edge.

Shortly before Leeming and Hinkler made their visit to Helvellyn, Captain T.S. Stack the Lancashire

Aero Club's paid instructor and B.M.T.S.Leete, a member of the club who had seen service in the Royal Air Force, set off for an adventurous flight which took them in two D.H.Moths from Stagg Lane via Paris, Malta, Benghazi and Baghdad to Karachi. Although the two pilots described the venture as a holiday jaunt, their 5,500 mile flight was regarded as sufficiently meritorious to justify the award of the Air Force Cross and a number of Indian flying clubs were set up as a direct result of the publicity given to their arrival.

In 1927 Woodford saw growing numbers of AVRO Avians leave the assembly sheds for delivery and during the year three notable flights were made from the aerodrome by a 22 year old Irishwoman, Mrs Sophie Elliott-Lynn who later became Lady Heath. On the 19th July she took off alone in the early morning and succeeded in landing at no less than 79 places in a tour of aerodromes and flying fields which commenced at a field near Altringham and ended in the late evening at Newcastle-on-Tyne. This flight was made in the Lancashire Aero Club's Avian, G-EBQL and was followed on the 25th by another flight in which the aviatrix succeeded in visiting four countries in the British Isles in a single day - no mean feat having regard to the 82mph cruising speed of the Avian. Mrs Elliott-Lynn made a number of flights in Europe during the summer but returned to Woodford on the 8th October when she succeeded in reaching a height of 19,200 feet in the Alpha engined Avian 11, G-EBSD with a passenger.

Interest in flying had developed as Britain drew away from the years of war and the Lancashire Aero Club gave opportunities for keen enthusiasts to learn the art. Pleasure flights could be had by daring members of the public with some of the barnstorming pilots who still toured the country or set up at North West holiday resorts, and the order books of the aircraft manufacturers were beginning to take on a more healthy appearance. However for the businessman or traveller, the Manchester area, in common with most of the country, offered little in the way of aerial transport. Imperial Airways and the Royal Air Force pioneered the establishment of international air routes and as early as March 1920 Croydon had been established as the London Customs Airport.

It is possible that Manchester might have been even earlier in the field of municipal airport operation if Lord Egerton of Tatton, who owned the site of the Alexandra Park Aerodrome, had been prepared to lease or sell the land. But he was adamant that it should not again be used for flying purposes and although the area passed to the City, it was as Hough End Playing Fields that it became known. (Only the Headquarters of 184 Squadron of the Air Training Corps today provides a tenuous link with the Royal Air Force's occupation.)

As early as August 1926 John Leeming had written to the *Manchester Guardian* advocating the establishment of an aerodrome in the area and Brooklands had been suggested as a site along with a small parish named Ringway to the south of Wythenshawe. Cobham's visit kept alive an

interest amongst the more far-sighted members of the City Council and the Chamber of Commerce. In 1928, following Leeming's publication and distribution of a booklet on "Manchester and Aviation," an Aerodrome Sub Committee was formed. Manchester was not alone in the area in considering the possibility of setting aside land for an aerodrome and in early 1928 both Bolton and Salford were pressed to have their own fields, but by June the City Surveyor called upon Leeming to report on possible sites for a City Aerodrome

John Lord wrote indicating that A.V.Roe and Co.Ltd. might well consider closing Woodford and moving to a suitable municipal aerodrome and in October the Sub-Committee inspected a number of proposed sites. On 17th October 1928 the *Manchester Evening News* came out with the headline "Ideal site selected at Barton" and announced that Manchester's new aerodrome would be within six miles of the heart of the City and even nearer to the great industrial estate at Trafford Park.

Having decided to become the first city in Great Britain to have a civic aerodrome, the Council set about preparing the site at Chat Moss. But it soon became apparent that, although later with a relevant decision, Hull was likely to be first with a suitable ground in operation at Hedon. Little prestige ever accrues to the runner-up in a race and to ensure Manchester's precedence in the field, a temporary site was found at Wythenshawe, where the Rackhouse estate now stands. Hedges were removed and a barn became the terminal building and hangar.

To be successful, an aerodrome, whatever the form of its management must have aircraft and operations. Leeming's concern that Manchester should not be left with a field in only limited use led him to consider the establishment of a company to provide air taxi and other services. In late 1928 he resigned his Chairmanship of the Lancashire Aero Club and joined with F.J.V.Holmes of Berkshire Aviation Tours Ltd. in the formation of Northern Air Transport Ltd and Northern Air Lines (Manchester) Ltd. A de Havilland DH.9 was purchased and a Moth and Two Avians were added to the large fleet of AVRO 504's brought into the concern by Holmes.

Captain A.N.Kingwill, a greatly experienced veteran of the Royal Flying Corps, was engaged as Chief Pilot and he was to prove a great asset in the difficult years of the enterprise's existence. Forty-five years after making the first landing at a municipal airport in Britain in the Moth G-EBZU, he was to renew his acquaintance with Manchester aviation at a ceremony to mark the opening of extensions to the Terminal at the present Manchester International Airport.

The initial landings at Wythenshawe were made on 2nd April 1929 and Kingwill was followed by Miss Winifred Brown in her Avian G-EBVZ and J.C.Cantrill, Peter Eckersley (later to become Captain of the Lancashire Cricket Club) and Alan Goodfellow in a similar aircraft of the Lancashire Aero Club. On the 29th April The Lord Mayor (Alderman George Westcott) flew to London

in the DH.50 G-EBQI (The Lancastrian) of Northern Air Lines to collect from the Air Minister Aerodrome Licence Number 1414 dated 19th April and valid for an initial period of six months from 22nd April. The aircraft went unserviceable at Croydon and the Lord Mayor returned to Wythenshawe in the DH.9c G-EBIG to brandish an entirely irrelevant piece of paper to the waiting crowd, the licence having been inadvertently left in London !

Wythenshawe did not remain open for a long period but a number of interesting visitors used the field as well as the resident aircraft of Northern Air Lines and the frequent training flights of the Lancashire Aero Club. The first foreign-built aircraft was the Fokker Universal, G-EBUT, the first Service aircraft a Gipsy Moth from Sealand and the largest visitor the Ford Trimotor NC8412 which called on a demonstration flight. It is interesting to observe that at least two of the visitors can still be seen, the more famous of them being the Gipsy Moth G-AAA (Jason) which is kept in the Science Museum honouring its later owner Amy Johnson. Under restoration is the Avian G-ACGT which was initially registered EI-AAB and only the second aircraft registered in Eire.

Although John Lord had shown a willingness to discuss a possible transfer of AVRO's test flying from Woodford to a new Manchester aerodrome, nothing came of the suggestion and Lord himself was to leave the Company shortly afterwards. When Alliott Verdon-Roe sold out his interest in the growing organisation which had taken his name, John Lord left with him and together they took over the firm of S.E.Saunders Ltd and formed Saunders-Roe Ltd. From 1928 A.V.Roe and Co Ltd came under the control of Sir W.G.Armstrong Whitworth Aircraft Ltd and the end of the decade saw the production facilities well occupied with 504N's for the R.A.F. and foreign Services as well as an encouraging flow of Avians for the civil market.

Whilst final assembly and test flying of AVRO aircraft took place at Woodford, many of the aircraft arrived there on their own wheels behind Company lorries. The aerodrome was also being well used by the aircraft of the Lancashire Aero Club.

After John Leeming's departure Alan Goodfellow had taken over as Chairman and drawing upon his wartime piloting experience and the acumen which was building a steadily developing legal practice, he guided the Club into and through the difficult years of depression. The Club which now had a new hangar and a comfortable clubhouse, had wiped out a deficit and built up a credit balance at the bank and could boast four Avians and a Cirrus Moth for the use of a membership of over 300.

On the 5th July 1930 the King's Cup Air Race attracted 88 starters who left Hanworth to fly a virtual circuit of England and the winner was Miss Win Brown in her Avian G-EBVZ. Miss Brown an England international hockey player, was accompanied by another member of the Lancashire Aero Club, Ron Adams whom she later married. Although she continued to fly for some years

afterwards, she had a notable but very different wartime connection with aviation. After taking her ticket as a trawler skipper she became Chief Coxwain at the flying boat base at Beaumaris.

The Club continued to train pilots under its successive Chief Flying Instructors and the voluntary part-time instructors; one of whom, Mark Lacayo, one of the founder members, was seriously injured on the unlucky 13th April when his Avian crashed near Woodford. Although John Leeming's restless enterprise was now employed elsewhere, there was no lack of initiative in keeping the club in the forefront of light aviation and in seeking fresh outlets for members' skills and interest.

The Lancashire Aero Club was not slow to become involved in the mushrooming gliding movement and a Prufing primary glider was acquired from Germany. A gliding section of the Club was formed and B.A.G.Meads was appointed Chairman. (In later years Basil Meads was to become President of both the Lancashire Aero Club and the Derbyshire and Lancashire Gliding Club also the greatly respected Vice Chairman of the Manchester Branch of the Royal Aeronautical Society. He sadly passed away on 26th August 1989). Short flights were made with the Prufing at Woodford and on the 31st July 1930 the first inter-club gliding match ever held in Britain took place when a team from the Lancashire Aero Club visited the London Gliding Club at Ivinghoe Beacon. On the 19/20th October of that year Alan Goodfellow came second in a competition involving six clubs at Ditchling Beacon.

The opening of the Airport of Manchester at Wythenshawe had given Manchester a well deserved lead in municipal proprietorship of a centre for air transport but work to create an aerodrome on the difficult surface of Chat Moss continued and on the 1st January 1930 Manchester began the new decade with a new airport at Barton.

The official record notes that the first aircraft to land was the Avian G-AADL of Northern Air Lines piloted by Captain A.N.Kingwill. The first Service aircraft visited on the 6th January when an AVRO 504N, J9684 was flown in by Flight Lieutenant Barnes from Sealand and the issue of a permanent public use licence on the 1st April was followed three weeks later by a visit from a Desoutter Monoplane G-AAPX with Sir Sefton Brancker.

The Prime Minister, Ramsey Macdonald, broke his journey to Scotland in the Imperial Airways Argosy G-EBLF on the 25th May to inspect the Aerodrome. His Pilot on this occasion was Captain O.P.Jones who, although he had visited Wythenshawe on a number of occasions had not previously been to Barton which he described, possibly diplomatically, as an admirable landing ground. The first Royal visitor to Barton was the Duke of Gloucester who arrived in a Royal Air Force Wapiti on the 8th July, ironically to attend an agricultural show at Hough End Fields-the site of the former Alexandra Park Aerodrome.

The Airport was managed by Northern Air Lines for the Airport Committee whose Chairman,

Alderman William Davy (later to be knighted), had long been a supporter of efforts to provide airport facilities for Manchester and the resident manager was William (Bill) Ledlie. Former farm buildings were used as offices and a large hangar flanked by petrol pumps had been erected. The Aerodrome Hotel was ready for opening shortly after the aerodrome and it might well have been named "The Pitot Head" but the suggestion was turned down by the Airport Committee.

Great efforts were made by Northern Air Lines to build up business in the air taxi and aerial advertising fields and the public were frequently encouraged to come to Barton to see flying exhibitions. As early as the 26th January the crowds at the aerodrome were such as to make flying hazardous. In July, Barton was a calling place for participants in the King's Cup Air Race; over 20,000 paid for admission and twice that number were reported as watching from outside the boundary. After the racing aircraft had departed, the public were treated to a display of stunt and crazy flying by Kingwill and N.A.L. pilots Bonar and Mckay.

From the earliest days at Wythenshawe (which finally closed in 1930) Leeming and Holmes had found the financial path of Northern Air Lines to be both uphill and strewn with pitfalls. As the Company pressed on with its activities at Barton, the joy-riding fleet of AVRO 504's ranged widely and gave large numbers of people a first experience of the air. Facilities at Wythenshawe had been virtually non-existent and as well as experiencing difficulty in keeping their own aircraft flying, N.A.L. found that the outside maintenance and repair work which had provided a source of income at Shrewsbury could not be undertaken. A little of this work returned when the Company moved to Barton but capital was hard to come by and although some customers, notably the newspaper concerns, provided air taxi work, the prevailing trade conditions prevented other well disposed concerns from doing so.

Some flying training was carried on and plans were made for a service from Barton to Liverpool, Blackpool and the Isle of Man. But Manchester money was in cotton, which was having a bad time and little finance could be found. Some comfort was found in the return from occasional displays at Barton and wonders were done with the few serviceable aircraft which could be spared from the joy-riding fleets. Occasionally for these shows aircraft were borrowed, in particular the Avian owned by Peter Eckersly, who had succeeded Alan Goodfellow as Chairman of the Lancashire Aero Club, was put to good use. Kingwill and such pilots as George Yuill and Bill Ledlie flew continuously to give the public value for money.

The Manchester Aero Club (successor in name only to the pre-1914 Club at Trafford Park) was formed in 1932 in an attempt to rescue the situation. Meetings were held at the Barton Airport Hotel but by mid-1933 the Airport Committee had transferred the management of the aerodrome to Airwork Ltd. and shortly afterwards Northern Air

Lines Ltd. went into liquidation. John Leeming was to write later that the Company had been five years ahead of its time.

The Manchester Aero Club was taken over by the Lancashire Aero Club who placed two aircraft at Barton and continued to provide flying training and a high standard of club facilities at Woodford. No less than for other local organisations, the commercial slump had brought some anxiety but membership and flying activity had been maintained and the Club had continued to play its part in the national structure of club flying. Several newly fledged light aircraft clubs in the North West, some of them still thriving, had owed their existence to encouragement and assistance from Woodford.

Lancashire Aero Club members had taken part with distinction in successive King's Cup races and such events as the 1931 and 1932 Liverpool-Manchester Inter City races. F.R. Hall won the Society of British Aircraft Constructors' Cup at Heston on the 20th June, 1931 in the Club's Avian G-EBRR and on the 18th June, 1932 the Lancashire Aero Club organised a two-lap race round the Isle of Man; the competitors being shepherded across the Irish Sea from Stanley Park at Blackpool by a Saro Cutty Sark of British Amphibious Air Lines. An interesting aircraft which joined the Club fleet was the Desoutter Monoplane, G-ABRN operated for the British Red Cross Society.

The opening days of 1934 found Manchester with its own aerodrome but with virtually no contact with the air transport services which were beginning to pattern the globe with routes both between the nations and within their frontiers. Britain's major efforts were directed toward linking London with the Continent and outposts of the Empire and there were few services between the country's other towns. On the 23rd January the famous K.L.M. pilot Captain Ivan Smirnoff came to Barton in the Fokker FX11. PH-AII to survey the aerodrome for inclusion in a route to Amsterdam and he was not impressed. The Royal Dutch airliners were to become familiar to many Manchester people and their regularity was observed with some admiration but they were to be seen only on passage over the city on the stage from Liverpool to Hull.

Although the Manchester City Council had been disappointed in their hopes for Barton and immediately commenced to seek a more suitable site for a major airport, the aerodrome was far from the total liability that some have continued to suggest over the years. If not suitable for the most modern airliners even of that period, it was able to handle the internal air services which developed in the latter half of the decade and on the 9th May, 1934 it was used for early experimental air cargo flights by two Airspeed Couriers, G-ACJL and G-ACJT leased by Bouts-Tillotson Transport. Railway Air Services Ltd used the four-engined de Havilland Express, G-ACVY (Mercury) to inaugurate a Croydon, Castle Bromwich, Barton, Belfast, Renfrew service on the 20th August and thus linked Manchester with a number of major

cities. The loss of the K.L.M. service was largely made up when on the 17th June, 1935 Hillman Airways Ltd commenced to fly the route Hull, Manchester, Liverpool, Belfast.

Barton continued to attract large crowds for the annual Empire Air Day displays and Cobham continued to visit the Manchester area with his Display, using amongst other sites Longford Road, Reddish and a field at Alkrington which the Middleton Council had ideas of developing as a permanent aerodrome. His display at Woodford on the 30th May 1935 was marred by the death of his parachutist Ivor Price whose parachute failed to open.

No summary of flying in the thirties would be complete without mention of the Flying Flea. Over the years much effort had been directed towards the evolution of a small machine which the mythical "average man" could build, fly and maintain. In the 1935 publication of "Practical Mechanics", plans for Henri Mignet's Pou-du-Ciel led many enthusiasts to believe that they could achieve a short-cut to inexpensive aviation. The *Daily Express* sponsored construction and French-built aircraft embarked on demonstration tours of Britain, one being shown off at Barton on the 10th August 1935.

Amongst the more substantial organisations to look at the construction of the Flying Flea was the Trafford Park timber company, F.Hills and Sons Ltd. A number of employees completed an aircraft G-ADOU and tested it at Barton but their principal achievement was to thoroughly frighten themselves and the firm's management and the project was shelved.

However the company had observed a potential market for a small and inexpensive aircraft and obtained a licence to build the Czechoslovakian Praga E114 as the Hillson Praga.(Note: Hillson = Hill and Son). Powered by a 36hp Praga engine built by Jowett Cars Ltd, the first aircraft to be tested at Barton G-AEEU arrived at the aerodrome on the 24th May 1936 and a total of 35 aircraft emerged from the Trafford Park factory.

Hill's managing director W.R.Chown had experienced flying training and although the Praga did not achieve many sales to private owners, its flyaway price of £385 made it attractive to a number of clubs. Chown set up the Northern Aviation School and Club Ltd at Barton where the little aircraft were a familiar sight until the start of the Second World War. In 1937 Hills built a development designed by Norman Sykes as the Hillson Pennine with a Praga engine and an unorthodox control system but although a flight test was made at Barton on the 4th February 1938, the aircraft was not successful and passed into obscurity.

When Captain Smirnoff made his crushing pronouncement on the inadequacy of Barton for international services, Manchester's Airport Committee and the relevant City officials did not waste time. Sites at Audenshaw, Bury and Mobberley were inspected and some thought was given to the use of the existing aerodrome at

Woodford. On the 25th July 1934 the City Council approved by one vote, the construction of a second airport at Ringway on the southern boundary of the City. Alderman Tom Regan of Gorton, who was to be a member of the Airport Committee for over forty years, always maintained that it was his vote which tipped the scale!

Barton continued to receive a varied selection of aircraft as private flying boomed and Service visits increased. A glance at the tower log reveals visits by such varied types as an RAF Valencia K2344, the Lockheed 10, OK-CTA of the Bata Shoe Company and Sir Kenneth Crossley's Hornet Moth G-ADKC, the registration of which was a forerunner of many present-day personalised allocations.

On the 1st October 1937, Airwork brought six Gipsy Moths to be used by No.17 Elementary and Reserve Flying Training School of the Royal Air Force, the Unit's first headquarters being at Sunlight House in Quay Street in Manchester. An Air Ministry control centre was established at the aerodrome on the 21st October 1937 and when the Civil Air Guard was set up in July 1938 to train men and women at cheap subsidised rates the Northern Aviation School and Club soon adopted the scheme. The Lancashire Aero Club also trained pilots of the C.A.G. at Woodford.

Although Barton was never regarded as a big aerodrome, it successfully received and dispatched quite large aircraft including a Wellington L4284 of No.148 Squadron from Stradishall on the 11th April 1939 and a Bombay L5813 which arrived from Odiham on the 26th July 1939 and made no fewer than ten local flights before departing.

The outbreak of war saw a complete upheaval of the activities at Barton. Within a short time the firms which had used the aerodrome in peace-time were required to leave. The field was requisitioned for National Air Communications and companies such as Air Taxis Ltd, Personal Airways Ltd and Wrightways Ltd moved in. Civil flying without special permit was prohibited and the aircraft which the new residents flew on communications work soon acquired camouflage and Service serial numbers. The Civil Air Guard ceased to operate and the Airwork operated aircraft of No.17 E.+R.F.T.S. were flown away.

Both Personal Airways and Wrightways failed to survive the war years, although for some time the latter carried out aircraft and engine repair work at Barton. Air Taxis Ltd took on the repair of AVRO Ansons for the RAF and expanded their work force as they filled the main hangar with damaged aircraft brought in by road and other Ansons flown in for overhaul. The Airport Hotel was commandeered in 1940 and remained in Service hands until after the cessation of hostilities.

Although it was not felt necessary to lay down runways at Barton, a surprising selection of heavy and potent aircraft visited the aerodrome from time to time. Wellington, Whitley, Dakota and Mosquito aircraft all successfully landed in safety. On 25th April 1944, a Flight Sergeant Crawford from

Waterbeach brought a Lancaster, ND920 which circled the field before landing without apparent difficulty. The crew had lunch in the Air Taxi's canteen whilst various suggestions for dismantling the aircraft were made, as it was thought that it had little chance of taking off in the available distance. The pilot insisted that he could leave safely and the Lancaster was dragged back to the edge of the aerodrome, run up to full power and released to take off with ease and return to Waterbeach.

Various types of fighter aircraft used Barton, notable visitors including Squadron Leader Bader (later Group Captain Sir Douglas Bader) who brought his Spitfire P4431 of 222 Squadron from Kirton-in-Lindsey on the 13th June 1940 and Pilot Officer Peter Brothers (later to reach air rank in the post-war Royal Air Force) who flew in from time to time. A Lockheed P38 Lightning visited in 1942 and Martlets and a Buffalo added variety to the Hurricanes and Corsairs which became common as the war went on.

Civil air transport returned to Barton in 1940 and until the service reverted to the use of Speke in 1942, West Coast Air Services Ltd and Aer Lingus operated DH86B Express Airliners to Dublin, the latter Company occasionally using Douglas DC3s on the route. The service was not without its hazards and on the 18th October 1941 the DH86B G-AENR was damaged by gunfire from a "friendly" merchant ship.

The Ministry of Aircraft Production took over the control of Barton from National Air Communications and throughout the war years the supervision of activities was in the hands of Mr. J.B. Lee who had been employed by Manchester Corporation before the war and returned to their employ at Barton in 1946. Four new hangars were built during the war and one of these was taken over by Hills and Son for the erection of Percival Proctors.

Another hangar was occupied by David Rosenfield Ltd the well known Manchester motor dealers and a subsidiary of Henlys Ltd. When war broke out the sale of motor cars for civilian use was heavily curtailed and the Company undertook subcontract work on Fairey Battles. The Manchester Ice Palace was taken over and Hurricanes were brought to the building for repair and modification. Conversion of Hurricanes for catapulting from Merchant Navy ships was also carried out at Cheetham Hill. As the work expanded, the hangar at Barton was used for assembly and air testing of Fulmars and Corsairs followed by Hurricanes.

Not far from the Metrovick works the Trafford Park factory of Hills and Son commenced its adjustment to war by first producing quantities of aircraft plywood and wooden propellers. Praga production had ceased and the Company's original

hangar at Barton had been requisitioned but contracts for the manufacture of Anson components and later complete Percival Proctor aircraft were undertaken. For this work Hills moved into a newly built hangar at Barton but, until this was completed, a Bellman hangar at Ringway was shared with the Air Transport Auxiliary whose Captain A.W. Vincent air-tested the first Proctors produced there. Conditions at Ringway were far from satisfactory but, with the move to Barton the rate of production increased and the Company went on to provide the Royal Air Force with over 700 Proctors for use as radio trainers and communications aircraft.

The unsuccessful Hillson Pennine had been followed by a small monoplane powered by a 90hp Cirrus Minor and named the Helvellyn. Only one G-AFKT was built and this served the Company as a communications aircraft in the early years of the war. Its designer, Norman Sykes, then evolved a novel aircraft to test the possibility of increasing the range of fighter aircraft by providing a detachable upper wing to enable take-offs to be undertaken with much larger fuel loads.

Known as the Hillson Bi-mono, the aircraft was basically a low wing monoplane using a de Havilland Gipsy Six engine. The aircraft flew from Barton, in both monoplane and biplane configurations, before the first release of the upper wing over the Irish Sea after taking off from Squires Gate in the hands of Percy Richmond (later to be tragically killed in a Prentice in 1959). The tests were sufficiently successful to justify the modification and testing of a Hurricane as the Hillson FH40 with a similarly detachable upper wing but although tests were made at Sealand and Farnborough the project was not pursued.

With the outbreak of War in 1939 private flying had ceased. Many members of the Lancashire Aero Club had dispersed into the Forces; as a result the club became moribund. To any reasonable observer it would have seemed that it had closed and would never start again. But soon after the war ended a few enthusiasts got together, formed a committee and with grim determination re-established the Lancashire Aero Club. How they managed to overcome the immense difficulties of this time; how they built up the Club again is almost unbelievable.

There have been uneasy times but despite initial difficulties in the years immediately after the war the efforts of a succession of Chief Flying Instructors - not least the greatly experienced Squadron Leader A.A. (Charlie) Rollo and the work of enthusiastic volunteers have maintained the club's position as the focal point of private flying in the North West.

Chapter 2

The First Few Years

by John F. Leeming

Part One

In the early days of 1921 a man named John Leeming decided to build a glider. He had some elementary knowledge of stresses and design but in those days there was not much accurate data available as to the design, loading or construction of gliders. It was a case of build what you thought seemed right and see what happened.

Leeming had no workshop large enough to house a man carrying glider but he overcame this difficulty making the parts in a cellar and then building the aircraft in a small wooden garage normally used for his two seater car. When work on the glider was in process the car was pushed out into the road. When the evening's work ended the two wings were put upright along each side of the garage, the fuselage hoisted with ropes and pulleys into the roof and the car returned to its home between and under the growing aircraft. Incidentally the size of garage was a governing factor in the size of the aircraft!

Needing materials, ash longerons for the fuselage, wing spars, ribs and so on and having little money to spare, Leeming decided the best way to obtain these was to persuade some aircraft manufacturer to let him sort through their scrap heap. With characteristic impudence he telephoned A.V. Roe and Co Ltd and spoke to their director in charge, Mr John Lord. Possibly Mr Lord got the wrong impression and thought that a considerable order was about to materialise, anyway he invited Leeming to visit their works at Newton Heath. When Leeming did so and Mr Lord found that all that was required was a free run of the firm's scrap heap, if Mr Lord felt any disappointment he was kind enough not to show it. Permission was given and a young man named Clement Wood in the AVRO Sales Department offered to assist in the search for materials.

Wood took Leeming into the Works and introduced him to Tom Prince, then a foreman at AVRO. Prince immediately became interested and when he found that the Glider was to be built at Hale, Cheshire which was near to his home, he volunteered to help with the construction. It was arranged that a start should be made the following Saturday afternoon. From then on each Saturday afternoon and each Tuesday/Thursday evening Prince and Leeming worked on the Glider, with Wood also helping on occasions.

Prince was a master at his job and under his direction, he soon became the acknowledged director of activities, construction went ahead steadily. Not quickly, for Prince insisted on accurate and careful work. He went on unhurried and unmoved by the impatience of the other two.

In one of his books AIRDAYS, Leeming wrote "Two evenings a week and every Saturday afternoon we worked. First we would push the car out of the garage and put up the car hood in case it rained; then the fuselage was lowered from the roof and work proceeded. Gradually the glider began to take shape.

I remember so clearly those long evenings in the tiny wooden garage; Tom Prince showing me how to make the best use of tools explaining why every fitting must be absolutely correct, examining a job and scrapping ruthlessly anything not exactly right. "Nothing's 'good enough,'" he would murmur, "It's either quite right or it's wrong."

Before I worked with Tom Prince I fancied I understood how to do sound work, believed I was a reasonably capable mechanic. He changed all such ideas; he set a new standard in my mind, a degree of accuracy that I have tried to live up to ever since."

All through the winter of 1922 work continued on the glider, and about this time two other enthusiasts heard of what was going on and volunteered to help. One was Herbert Bayliss, a fitter at George Richards, the Machine Tool Makers, the other Mark Lacayo, a young businessman who had "flying in his bones" and who was never so happy and content as when he was near aircraft. It was flying and only flying that interested Lacayo. An unassuming kindly nature made him later one of the most popular members of the Club. Lacayo was eventually killed in a flying accident. Bayliss in a road accident.

Occasionally Clement Wood joined the working party. He had real enthusiasm and through his influence at AVRO was able to help in obtaining the necessary materials. Keen and interested he became an active partner in the project.

In 1922 a competition for gliders was organised at Ilford. Although the Leeming-Prince-Wood glider was not completed and none of its builders could attend the competition, accounts published in the newspapers aroused so much enthusiasm the work on the LPW was seriously impeded. As Tom Prince described it "Talk, talk, talk. Nobody doing any work at all!"

On the last day of the competition a Frenchman, Maneyrol made a flight lasting three hours twenty minutes - a world record. The flight was fully authenticated, observed and vouched for by responsible people. Amazing as it then seemed a glider could remain in the air not for just minutes but for hours. To cap everything, the newspapers related that a Squadron Leader Gray had also

stayed up for more than an hour in a home made contraption that had cost little more than twenty shillings. A glider made out of a discarded Bristol Fighter fuselage and the wing from an old Fokker.

Excitement among the builders of the LPW reached fever-pitch. What others could do so could they. On the evening the news was published, Lacayo became so overwrought that he was sick and had to go home early.

All through the winter of 1922 work continued. With A.V.Roe & Co., allowing a free run of their scrap heap, Prince and Wood were able to find almost all the necessary materials and these were carefully worked upon and adapted to their new purpose. The two wings were completed and covered, the tail and rudder, the fuselage and undercarriage followed; by Christmas only the controls remained unfinished. To speed up the job, it was decided to move the fuselage from the garage (the tedious process of moving the car, lowering the fuselage and hoisting it up again after work was a big time waster) to a greenhouse at the back of Leeming's garden. This was converted into a workshop by patching up the roof and cutting an additional and wider doorway at one end.

Tom Prince wrote:-

"I remember very well taking the partition down between the greenhouse and potting shed and making the door larger, also getting the machine out to the garage, where there was electric light, and then putting it back in the greenhouse at about midnight. How well we used to manoeuvre it over the lawn and amongst the shrubs in the dark!"

Of course, people began to hear of this "aeroplane being built in a garage" and out of curiosity - for aircraft were still a novelty in those days - acquaintances called to see what was happening. Almost all the workers at one time or other brought a friend with them - Lacayo brought many. Some of these visitors became interested and offered to come again and help. One evening Tom Prince brought another AVRO worker with him, a man named Arthur Ainsworth who in due course became one of the keenest members of the party.

In this way the little band slowly increased, until on Tuesday/Thursday evenings and Saturday afternoons there were often eight or nine enthusiasts, congesting the tiny garage and greenhouse. It was this overcrowding that led to the idea of forming a Club. Lacayo had suggested the idea to Clement Wood quite early in the association.

"Well anyway" he went on, "We'll soon need a field to fly it in and we all hope to have a try so why not each of us pay our share of the field rent? If each of us contributed a few bob it would do the trick."

That was how the present Lancashire Aero Club started. A glider being built in a cellar, moved into a garage and later into a greenhouse: a few enthusiasts helping with the work of building, clubbing together to pay the rent of a field. Sir

Sefton Brancker, later Director of Civil Aviation, stated that it was hearing of this glider club that gave him the idea of Light Aeroplane Clubs subsidised by the Government. He reasoned that if people were keen enough to do all this work without support or encouragement, a little help from the Air Ministry might develop the idea into a really useful movement.

The New Lancashire Aero Club formally came into being in 1922. Clement Wood, who even in those days had already shown his ability for precise organisation - "getting it down properly on paper" he called it - drew up a set of rules and a constitution for the Club. A meeting was held in the greenhouse and the enthusiasts now ten in number elected themselves the first committee of The Lancashire Aero Club. Leeming was elected as the Chairman; Wood as the Secretary.

Incidentally the name by which the Club was to be known caused considerable argument. The title most favoured at first was The Lancashire Flying Club and it took all Tom Prince's eloquence to convince the members that "Flying" was usually applied to pigeon clubs and was quite unsuitable for an organisation that hoped to fly gliders. Again the word Lancashire seemed inappropriate. Prince, Wood, Lacayo, Bayliss and Leeming all lived in Cheshire. Only one of the members could claim to be a Lancashire man. But it was expected that from Manchester would come most of the future members; Manchester was in Lancashire and it was people in that area it was felt desirable to placate.

The annual subscription was fixed at 10/- and an entrance fee of 10/- agreed. With this total capital of five pounds Wood had the Rules printed in booklet form, membership forms and notepaper printed and as he said "Most important of all" he bought a Minute Book.

While the glider was being built and the club, such as it was, struggled through the first month of existence tremendous excitement was caused by the first light-aeroplane trials at Lympne. As a result of the glider meeting in the previous year, the idea of a motor-glider had occurred to certain designers. They had seen a plane remain in the air for more than three hours, and knew that sustained flight was possible - as long as the glider patrolled the ridge of a hill where rising air currents kept it up. Now, if a glider were fitted with a tiny engine, they reasoned, an engine just sufficiently powerful to prolong its flight a little once it was in the air, then the glider would not be tied to one ridge of hills. It could cross to another rising current, gain height again, and repeat the manoeuvre. Long cross-country flights would be possible.

The press took up the idea enthusiastically. Motor-gliders became news, and to the man in the street it must have seemed that the motor-cycle of the air was a reality. The wildest nonsense was written and as hardly anyone knew anything about the subject, the designers' hopes - then only at the drawing office stage - were hailed as actual and proved facts. "Fly for petrol's cost," "Baby planes for all," shouted the headlines.

At last the Daily Mail put the thing to the test. It offered a prize of a thousand pounds for the motor-glider that gave the best performance under certain specified conditions, and called upon the Royal Aero Club to organise official trials where these tests might be carried out.

Aircraft manufacturers, who had jibbed at risking their meagre capital on the motor-gliders when there was no chance of a recompense, now began to view the matter in a more friendly light. The Air Ministry approved of the proposal, but made it clear that they had no money to disburse. After numerous conferences rules were drawn up and designers allowed to get to work, but, as the year was already well advanced and the trials were fixed for October - the latest date at which reasonable weather was considered probable - there was little time for construction and no time at all for preliminary test or experiment. Many of the motor-gliders were actually finished on the aerodrome at Lympne, and nearly all of them attempted to take to the air for the first time. Unkind people even suggested that their makers dared not risk a trial flight before competition, in case they should have no machine to bring to Lympne.

As a social affair the first Lympne trials were a huge success. It was the first real gathering of the clans since the War, and almost every one connected with aviation - not a very large number in 1923 - managed to attend on one pretext or another. Pilots who had not met since War days made the night hideous with the revelry of their reunions.

Again, the very nature of the planes at Lympne caused the old happy spirit to predominate. Almost all the machines were experimental; no one was sure if his machine would fly at all, or what would happen to him if he did not get into the air. The untried motor-cycle engines refused to start and gave endless trouble; no one understood them. It was like the merry days of pre-War uncertainty back again, and the flying people enjoyed every minute.

While all this was going on one of the newspapers published a brief three-line paragraph stating that in Madrid a young Spaniard was experimenting with a novel machine that rose and descended vertically. The Spaniard's name was given as Juan de la Cierva, and his machine described as an "Auto-Giro".

In the December following the Lympne trials a comparatively unknown pilot, a Mr. Alan Cobham, astonished the world by flying a motor-glider, a de Havilland 53, from Croydon to Brussels.

Part Two

Towards the end of 1923 the LPW glider was moved to a hangar at Alexandra Park Aerodrome. This was a wartime drome with huge hangars and every possible convenience. Writing to the Air Ministry on the Club's new notepaper Wood managed to give them the right - or possible wrong - impression and the Ministry agreed to grant the

Club the use of one hangar and the right to fly on and off the landing ground for a monthly rent of one pound five shillings. In this way the Air Ministry achieved the distinction of becoming the Club's first creditor and from then on "last and final applications" for payment of rent became a regular part of procedure.

It may be of interest to note the exact terms in which Clem Wood announced the move to Alexandra Park. The circular letter he sent out to all members, prospective members and everyone he could think of read as follows:-

"The Committee is pleased to announce that the Club is affiliated to the Royal Aero Club of the United Kingdom, and that for the first year this affiliation has been granted free of any fees or conditions.

Arrangements have now been completed with the Air Ministry for the tenancy of a hangar at the Didsbury Aerodrome, and the use of the flying ground, and it is intended to commence operations with the modification and completion of the glider constructed by Mr. Leeming and friends (all members of the Club). This is to be followed at the very earliest possible moment by the construction of further machines to be designed and built by the members collectively under the guidance and with the assistance of those members who have special technical qualifications.

All members are therefore particularly requested to be present at the Aerodrome on Saturday 3rd May at 3 p.m. so that not only can a worthy beginning be made, but that suitable arrangements can be made for the further work of the Club. All who possess small tools particularly carpenter's chisels, screwdrivers, spanners, pliers, small hammers, files etc., are asked to bring these along for their own use. Carpenter's and engineer's rules are also most useful. If any members care to bring sandwiches etc., for an alfresco meal, arrangements can doubtless be made for obtaining tea from some of the nearby hutments which are occupied by the police.

There are still several members whose entrance fees and subscriptions have not been paid, and we wish them to fully appreciate that the welfare of the Club depends solely on prompt payment, more particularly at the present moment. I can personally assure all members that this is a very serious matter and has been the cause of very considerable difficulty to the Committee in making the preliminary arrangements. On May 3rd, however the Treasurer will be present and it is earnestly hoped that all members who have not yet done so, will come prepared to pay on that date, when receipts can be given at once."

The enthusiasts, now with the exclusive use of one colossal hangar, built work benches, provided tools, began work on two other gliders and generally proceeded to enjoy themselves. But the need for more supporters very soon became apparent. The various projects were costing money and the regular monthly reminders of rent due worried Clement Wood considerably. Wood had an orderly brain and it disturbed him to know that

while only three of the members had paid their entrance fees and only eight their subscriptions the Club was buying tools, timber, stationery and other things. He was undoubtedly the official Secretary and the way his remonstrations were greeted - "Never mind, if the worst comes to the worst Old Clem can do six months" - did little to reassure him.

Largely through Wood's efforts a recruiting meeting was arranged in Manchester. The local newspapers helped by inserting notes in their journals giving the date, time and place of the meeting. Various friends of Leeming's on the Press persuaded their editors to allow them to put in chatty little 'pars' on the subject. Lacayo toiled laboriously, and produced several posters which he endeavoured to persuade shopkeepers to display on their premises. One member had a thousand handbills printed at his own expense, and these we all distributed by pushing them under front doors. Lacayo took a hundred or so and, setting off with a pocket full of coppers and two boxes of drawing pins, refused to explain his intentions. Later it came out - to the great distress of Wood - that Lacayo had visited many of the public lavatories in Manchester, and in each cubicle pinned up a handbill.

Lacyao's offended retort when Wood learned the truth was "Well damn it all, you said we must get more members, and you told me to let people know about the rotten meeting!"

The evening of the great assembly arrived. It was perhaps unfortunate that Wood had arranged for this to be held in a religious institute in Deansgate, for although the institute possessed a large hall with adequate accommodation, it lacked that cosy air so necessary for a friendly meeting of the kind we contemplated.

When the ten club members mounted the platform, there were perhaps twelve other people in the great hall. Of these, two left as soon as the proceedings started, finding that they had made a mistake and come to the wrong place; and of the others one slept soundly throughout the discussion; efforts to arouse him failed completely.

Wood made an eloquent speech explaining in detail the constitution of the Club. Leeming followed with an optimistic and altogether untruthful picture of the Club's present position and future programme. The rest of the members supported in principle, but took the attitude summed up by Lacayo when he said "Me stand up there on a platform and make speeches? Not damned likely!"

Fortunately several of the audience gave their views, and a general discussion resulted. When the meeting closed the club was the stronger for six new members, and these were members who quickly proved themselves to be the right sort - really keen, as willing to take tyres off the LPW. and mend punctures as to get into the seat and try to fly the thing. Among these were Dyson, Salthouse, Williams, Braid and Cowan.

The LPW. flew for the first time on May 24th, 1924; Lacayo was the pilot. The method of launching was the one sometimes still adopted today. A car, familiarly known as 'Bold Alfred' towed the glider to the far side of the aerodrome, where it was turned and faced into wind. A long tow rope of perhaps two hundred feet was then fixed between the car and the glider, and the car driven as rapidly as possible into wind. In theory the glider then rose into the air after a short run, and flew along until the other side of the aerodrome was reached, where it cast off the tow rope and glided in to land.

What usually happened in reality was: (a) the tow-rope broke, (b) the glider stood on its nose, (c) a wheel came off. The fun was immense, and on every evening when sufficient members could get to the drome and the weather allowed the machine to be brought out of its hangar, the members tried to make that LPW fly. One of the troubles at this time was the length of grass, really hay - at least three foot long. The hay wrapped round the wheels of the car, and it became necessary to pause after each attempted flight while two people crawled under the car and tugged away the entanglements.

But the LPW did eventually fly - a long, steady glide, about six feet above the ground, of perhaps a hundred yards or more. After that many flights were made, some much longer, some a great deal higher. All through the summer the LPW flew whenever the weather and other circumstances allowed. And the club membership increased - an odd one here, another there. They were happy, informal days.

When Wood insisted there was a committee meeting, the committee usually sat round in a circle on the grass. With a real sense of the fitness of things, Wood used to always provide the chairman, with a soap-box to sit upon, but the irresponsibility of the members was a sore trial to that worthy secretary.

On one occasion when, after considerable trouble Wood had at last gathered the party together and proceeded to read the minutes of the last meeting, suddenly there came an interruption from one of the committee men reclining on the grass.

"Here, I say, laddie", Salthouse intervened; "we've had all this before. I remember it distinctly. That bit about old John and the tyres. Really, I do".

It was with the greatest difficulty that the resulting argument was hushed.

"It's a rum thing," the discontented one murmured, as Wood started again to read the minutes "a very rum thing. Going over all that rot again. I don't understand what he's playing at."

In September the LPW suffered a bad crash, which necessitated its being almost entirely rebuilt. It happened this way.

Almost every time one of the newspapers mentioned the club a new member would join. Sometimes after an especially good 'write up' or a

photograph the club got as many as two new members, and in this way the committee became a firm and ardent believer in the power of the Press. Now, 'pars' in the newspapers were not always easy to obtain. Lord Northcliffe's remark that what people want you to put in is advertisements, and what they want you to leave out is news, was very true about publicity. Anyway in September it was arranged with certain newspapers that photographers should be sent down to the drome and the club promised them a photograph of the glider actually in the air.

The appointment was fixed for a Thursday afternoon at five o'clock. Not many of the members could get down at that time, but the photographers did not wish to leave it any later in case the light failed. With only one member to drive the car and no one to steady the tail Leeming took the pilot's seat in the LPW. The photographers were spread out a hundred yards or so ahead.

That Thursday there was half a gale blowing. The machine should really never have left the hangar; it was only with the greatest difficulty and the assistance of all the Pressmen that it got out on to the aerodrome without having the plane blown right over. As Leeming sat waiting for the tow rope to tighten the wings rocked over, touching the ground, and the whole machine swayed and bucked in the strong wind. To quote the pilot's own words:-

"Almost as soon as the rope went taut the LPW leaped into the air. She was stiff and slow on the controls, and for perhaps a minute I was too busy trying to straighten her and hold her level to bother about anything else. Then, in the first lull, I suddenly realised the horrible truth, she had soared up in the wind like a kite. Far below lay the hangars, like tiny boxes. The tow rope was almost vertical. I looked down again. I don't think I have ever seemed so high above the ground in my whole life.

A moment or two later the driver of the car suddenly glanced round, saw no glider, glanced up; right above him soared the LPW. With a terrified yell he switched off the engine, jumped from the car, and ran madly from the spot where at any moment the thing might dive upon him. Once the car ceased to pull, once the rope slackened, it was all over. The LPW simply stalled.

I remember thinking as they pulled me out of the wreckage, how like a spilled box of matches that glider looked. In the newspaper photographs the next morning it looked just like that."

By the middle of 1924 the Air Ministry, having considered the question from all angles, decided that light-aeroplane clubs would be a useful means of extending this 'air mindedness' which the interfering newspapers talked so much about. Possibly this decision was expected by the fact that a new Director of Civil Aviation had recently been appointed, a man who cut across all sacred traditions by urging a hurry-up-and-get-things-done policy. Anyway the Treasury having been interviewed and all the necessary wires well and truly pulled in the correct and proper order, but

perhaps a little more rapidly than was usual, a statement was issued that the Government would give awards amounting to two thousand pounds to light aeroplanes which performed best at trials to be held at Lympne in September.

Of course, the object of these awards was to encourage manufacturers to produce a low-powered aeroplane that would be suitable for use by the clubs. It was generally understood that the firm whose machine behaved the most satisfactorily at Lympne would get the club orders.

The Ministry called to the manufacturers to rally round, and, although hardly any time had been left to them between the date of the announcement and the date of the trials in which to design and build such aircraft, the manufacturers jumped to it.

The arrangement and control of the trials was, as in the previous year, put in the hands of the Royal Aero Club who managed to induce several private individuals to offer, as an additional incentive further prizes. Rules and regulations were drawn up. The stage was all set for another merry party, and once again most of the performers prepared to enjoy themselves hugely.

Nearly every firm of note built machines for the Lympne competitions, and the pilots selected were the pick of Britain's best airmen. AVROs put in a baby biplane, known as the AVRO Avis: Bert Hinkler, their test pilot, of course flying it. The Hawker Company produced two Hawker Cygnets, flown by Longton and Raynham. Broad flew the 53 for de Havilland. Short Brothers entered a Short Satellite, George Parnell a Parnell Pixie, William Beardmores a Wee Bee. There were also many others. Some of the youths at Cranwell, the R.A.F. training college, even banded together and built a baby 'plane of their own, designed and flown by "Nick" Comper. this amateur effort pleased everyone by later winning one of the prizes.

There were three Lympne meetings; they were unique. Nothing like them has ever happened since, nor is it possible to reproduce the same spirit that animated those strange gatherings.

In 1924 few of the manufacturers were wealthy; they were the old pioneers, a little less youthful and now owning factories which, if lucky, turned out a few dozen aeroplanes a year. But they were still the same irrepressible adventurers who had built box-kites under railway arches and risked their lives in weird contraptions of bamboo and wire. From light aeroplanes they had certainly little to hope for in the way of financial recompense, and as in 1923, what they revelled in was the return of the old experimental days, the glorious uncertainty back again for a brief space. The pilots were the best of their type without jealousy of each other, eager to try to fly the new 'planes, keen as the designers to see if the things would get off the ground at all.

And so in due course almost every one connected with British Aviation gathered at Lympne. Every one knew every one else, every one was full out to help, and the result was a lot of pleasant people getting in each other's way.

There is something rather sad in looking back at those Lympne meetings, the last of the old pioneer days, the final flare-up before ambitious newcomers saw the opportunities aviation offered and began to stifle it with their unsentimental control - the swan song of the old crowd.

Part Three

The Lympne trials finished; the Air Ministry prizes were won by Piercy on the Beardmore Wee Bee and by Unwins on a Bristol Brownie, with Hawkers, Parnall, Comper and Westlands dividing the remainder of the prizes among them. After which all returned to their normal occupations.

Bert Hinkler, on the AVRO Avis, distinguished himself by flying his machine home from Lympne to Hamble, and *Flight* published an account of this, stating that "He had not the slightest trouble of any sort throughout the trip."

That comment on Hinkler's effort is perhaps the most significant summary of the 1924 light-aeroplane trials. When the tests ended - tests intended to discover which was the most suitable 'baby' training 'plane for the new clubs - *Flight* thus considered it worth reporting that an expert had flown less than a hundred miles without trouble. In other words, it looked as if the clubs were going to wait a little for their machines.

C.G.Grey, the editor of that plain-spoken journal *The Aeroplane*, made no bones about the matter. He described the 'consternation' at Lympne when out of the eighteen entries only eight passed the eliminating trials. He suggested that manufacturers had not been allowed sufficient time to design, and referred to "the practice of building machines on the aerodrome while the trials were in progress." C.G.Grey annoyed nearly every one - the Royal Aero Club officials, the Air Ministry, the manufacturers, and the engine makers - by simply pointing out with cold common sense the obvious truth.

After Lympne 1924 however, the Air Ministry lost no time - remember, the new Director of Civil Aviation, Sir Sefton Brancker, was now in charge. The trials ended on October 4; on October 16 an official statement was issued: "Valuable results have been achieved and these results warrant the formation of a small number of clubs. However, a considerable delay is inevitable. It has been found necessary to run engines at high speeds."

Unofficially people were told to go ahead forming clubs, and that some suitable training machine would eventually be found. Inspired by Major F. P.Scott, who toured the country on behalf of the official powers, little bands of enthusiasts in Newcastle, Leeds, Birmingham and London started work.....But in Manchester the Lancashire Aero Club had already been formed. Its members had already flown, in fact had gone even further - they had already crashed!

There was an announcement in the Press at this time that is interesting to look back upon today. It stated "A real start with airships at last.

Tuesday November 18 is likely to go down in history as one of the most important dates in the progress of aviation." Sir Samuel Hoare and Sir Philip Sassoon had just been appointed Secretary of State for Air and Under-Secretary of State for Air. Their first official act was to visit a village named Cardington and announce their decision to proceed with the construction of two airships. These airships would be known as the R100 and R101.

On the same day that the Secretary of State for Air made his momentous announcement at Cardington it happened that the Lancashire Club held a meeting in Manchester. A recruiting meeting it was, with the object of adding more members to the band. Although the members did not know it they also were making history - launching the movement that was to grow into the light-aeroplane clubs.

To be candid, at the time of that meeting the Lancashire Club's organisation was in a precarious state. If there was ever a moment when it was unwise to discuss the position and reveal facts about the club it was then.

There were however, a few bright spots peeping through the storm. A solicitor from Bolton, a J.P.Hall, had recently joined the club and had come to Wood's assistance in working out proper rules and a formal constitution. Between them they produced an organisation which, at least on paper, worked, and satisfied the Air Ministry. Hall was quite unlike any other solicitor I have ever met; keen and clear-sighted, able to see the best way out of most difficulties, he gave his services free. Only when the club grew and new comers with axes to grind began to use it for their own advantage did Hall lose interest.

At the recruiting meeting Wood and Hall described the constitution and the Air Ministry scheme for assistance. So eloquent were they that our practical difficulties seemed to be lost in the rhetoric. Sir William Kay, a prominent man in the city, presided and spoke encouragingly, if vaguely, of our objectives. Then Leeming was put up to arouse the necessary enthusiasm to secure the enrolment of members.

With a complete disregard of the truth he soared up into a picturesque description of the Club and its activities. Those present received the impression that the LPW was something like a Handley-Page bomber which leaped into the air many times each day. The lack of a suitable training machine was ignored. Finally he read a telegram from a Colonel Darby offering to give a second-hand AVRO 504 to the club. There are many people today who believe this Meeting on 18th November 1924 was the beginning of the Lancashire Aero Club. Actually it had been a small but active organisation for more than two years.

The next morning *The Manchester Guardian* stated that "Virtually every person present was enrolled a member." About 50 per cent. of these failed ever to pay a subscription, but still, the first fence had been cleared. There was jubilation among the elite.

The next problem was how to keep those who had been interested until such time as the club actually obtained its light aeroplanes. Various means of doing this were tried, and on the whole they proved surprisingly successful.

For instance, Dyson started a club library. He bought a few books on aviation, borrowed some others, and ordered *Flight* and *The Aeroplane*. Then he engaged a room for every Thursday evening from six to nine at the Nag's Head, and announced that members wishing to borrow volumes or read the weekly journals would find the club librarian in attendance between the hours stated. It is some indication of Dyson's keenness that he kept up this duty for nearly nine months, although during this period only four members visited him. Of these four, two did not come to borrow books but to ask him to join them in a drink.

Another member, Rex Williams, conceived the idea of a club magazine, a monthly journal that would give notice to the members of activities, and keep them interested by its witty and instructive articles. His plans somewhat restricted by the cold necessity of capital - or rather by the lack of it - the magazine eventually came out as a collection of duplicated typed sheets. But it was published nearly every month, and although Williams was forced to write most of the copy himself, literary talent being scarce among the members, his magazine did achieve its object.

The *Elevator*, as Williams named his journal, attained to more than local fame, and many distant aerodromes came to know of the club through its pages. Every one read it. Annoyed they might be, but still they read it, and when the remarks were not about themselves they chuckled. In later years, as the club grew The *Elevator* passed into the control of other hands and became more dignified. This was only fitting when the organisation it catered for had become established and important. Unfortunately the enthusiasm it had once created ceased to exist, and in due course, on the ground of unnecessary expense, publication was stopped. A pity, but perhaps by then The *Elevator* had served its purpose.

Sir Sefton Brancker once summed up the journal's history. "It used to be something like *La Vie Parisienne*," he said. "Now it's like a cross between C.G.Grey in a bad temper, telling every one what they've done wrong, and an editorial in a parish magazine."

One of the early members wrote: "Another means we tried of keeping members together during this period of inaction was by the arrangement of informal evening lectures. One of these will ever stay in my memory - a lecture on 'Gliding in Germany.'

Of course, our greatest trouble was to find anyone who could lecture at all. Those who knew much about flying were usually inarticulate or so embarrassed by the idea of speaking in public that nothing could be done with them. Those who could speak knew little of aviation. One day, when I was wondering how I could possibly find a

speaker for the next lecture, a friend of mine mentioned that on a recent visit to Germany he had seen a glider there. I am sure that I asked him if he would lecture on the subject - at any rate, I am sure I intended to do so - his statement that the first he knew of the matter was seeing his name billed as the speaker of the evening is possibly incorrect. Anyway, I was desperate for a speaker and if he was incautious enough to mention to me that he had seen a glider in Germany - well, it seems to me that he had no one to blame but himself.

However, Meade (not to be confused with Basil Meads who joined the club at a later date) was not the sort to let anyone down and in spite of many threats and considerable grumblings, when the appointed evening came he stood up on the platform and spoke to the assembled multitude. With a vague idea of helping him out Williams, who had discovered a spotlight, played the beam from this upon the speaker - at least, he did so whenever he could manage to focus the thing. It was perhaps unfortunate that, knowing little about the control of spotlights, Williams from time to time flashed vivid green or blue beams from his machine, and that in the end the lamp became too hot and began to fizz so loudly that talk became impossible for more than five minutes.

But the sequel always amused me. The lecture was reported in *Flight* guardedly - simply the speaker's name and a general statement that he had lectured on gliding. Shortly afterwards Meade went again to Germany, and while there visited one of the famous gliding schools. He had an introduction to the principal. Now, the principal was thorough and read the British Technical journals. He remembered reading of Meade's lecture and was delighted to meet the great English expert. I believe that before he properly understood what was happening Meade - who had never been in a glider in his life - found himself about to be catapulted off over the edge of a great hill, and it was only by considerable agility that he avoided this unpleasant experience.

By methods such as these we managed to keep the members together, and by early spring things began to be a little less difficult."

But by the Spring of 1925 the Club had been forced to leave its home at Alexandra Park. This dismissal was not due to the Club's failure to pay the rent - although such notice to quit was always a probability. It was due to the fact that Alexandra Park closed down. The Air Ministry, who now the first War had ended, had no funds to spare for such projects, pressed The Manchester Corporation to take it over. The Corporation after much discussions and argument eventually declined. The landing ground and the hangars reverted to their original owner, tenants were given notice, the hangars pulled down and the ground sold for a Corporation housing estate.

This lack of flying ground put the Club into serious difficulties. One of the conditions for Air Ministry support was that 'Approved Clubs' must provide, or at least have the use of a licenced aerodrome. When Alexandra Park closed down the

Club committee made desperate efforts to find an alternative ground. Members searched for large fields and tried unsuccessfully to persuade farmers to rent them. When at last a large ground was found near to Knutsford and the farmer admitted that he might consider the Club as his tenants, a land owner nearby objected and killed the whole project on the grounds that the aircraft might disturb his pheasants. A suitable field was found at Ringway on part of the land where Ringway Airport now stands but the proposed rent of £80 per annum frightened even the most reckless of the members and as for Clement Wood he simply refused to discuss it.

When things were at their blackest, help came once again from the AVRO Company. Forced to leave Alexandra Park they achieved what the Club could not do. They found and bought some large fields at Woodford and by ripping out the hedges, filling up the ponds and levelling the worst of the hillocks they made a landing ground that eventually became the Woodford Aerodrome of today. The AVRO Company had begun to take a kindly interest in the struggling Club. Sir William Letts, Harry Fildes, John Lord, Sir Kenneth Crossley, A.V.Roe and other Directors were influenced by the arguments of their Works Manager, Roy Dobson (Later Managing Director, Sir Roy Dobson) and the Company offered the Club the use of their ground and of part of a Bessemer hangar at nominal rent.

Of course the Club had no machine except the LPW to fly there, but the assurance of the Air Ministry that a suitable training aeroplane would shortly be forthcoming gave the members hope, and the 'possession' of an aerodrome seemed to bring the Club one step nearer to the reality of flying.

Mr Parnall, one of the original stalwarts of aviation hearing of the Club's difficulties was sympathetic and offered to give the Club the engine and propeller from his Parnall Pixie which had won a prize at Lympne. What was more, he sent them to us carriage paid, and to cap everything, posted also a cheque for fifty pounds - "to help pay for the cost of fitting the engine."

In possession of a small engine, it was naturally decided to fit it into the LPW and start the club's fleet with a 'motor-glider'. A workshop was obtained at Didsbury and members were invited to come down on Saturday afternoons to help with the work. But somehow it seemed impossible to recapture the old spirit that had once built the glider in a cellar. Most of the new members had joined to fly, not to work at building motor-gliders. Their hesitation seemed to affect the enthusiasm of the original band, and at last, finding that the work was making little progress, Leeming offered to cart the LPW back to his house again, rebuild it there, and fit the engine. Once completed, with the consent of Prince and Wood he presented the machine to the club.

As a power machine the LPW never really flew; it was too heavy for the tiny engine; but for some time it served a useful purpose as a 'penguin' that

is, members would drive it about the aerodrome under its own power, and in this way accustom themselves to the noise and wind of an aeroplane and the general movements of the controls.

It seems a pity that this first 'baby', the building of which had to some extent inspired the light-aeroplane club movement was neglected and eventually allowed to fall to pieces. It had a history, and might have been interesting in days to come. Some years ago a member offered to buy what remained of the LPW, to rebuild it in its original state, and then present it as a momento to be kept by the club. But the committee did not accept the offer, and in the end all that was left of the machine was left to deteriorate behind the hangar.

The position of the Air Ministry had by this time become somewhat difficult. In a fit of enthusiasm they offered two thousand pounds of the taxpayer's money as prizes, and had sponsored trials to decide which was the most suitable light aeroplane for club training. They were definitely committed to a scheme of 'assistance'.

These trials had produced no machine that was really suitable. True, in the hands of expert pilots the baby machines had put up a remarkable performance, and a few of them had flown for quite considerable periods. But it had become obvious that the necessity of running the tiny engines at far higher speeds than they were ever designed for led to trouble. Even when they were nursed and coaxed by experts their behaviour was erratic; in the case of the amateurs.....???

Again, owing to the low engine-power, every ounce of weight was a serious consideration, and in order to produce a machine that would get into the air at all, designers had been compelled to lighten and reduce every fitting. As a result of this cutting down, the finished machines seemed hardly strong enough to stand up to the heavy handling they would inevitably receive from unskilled pupils.

To put it bluntly, no ideal training machine had appeared as a result of the trials. C.G.Grey in the *Aeroplane* said so plainly, and asked the Ministry what they were going to do about it.

The five light-aeroplane clubs were also asking the question somewhat impatiently. On every possible occasion they impressed upon the unhappy Ministry the necessity for action. Members could not be held together on promises only, they said, and if the clubs did not get some sort of machine during the coming summer there might be no members left. The Scottish club had already retired from the scheme.

The Air Ministry found themselves in a particularly unpleasant position. They had asked - or at least encouraged - manufacturers to spend large sums of money designing and building a special type of aircraft. That these aircraft proved unsuitable for the purpose they were intended for was no fault of the manufacturers. The Air Ministry technical experts had suggested the nature of the tests at Lympne, machines had been

built to comply with these tests, and as far as this went the manufacturers had done what had been asked of them. The fault lay in the rules, which had demanded a super-light low-powered baby aeroplane instead of a sturdy, cheap training machine.

The situation was further complicated by another development. When the rules had been first announced, designer Geoffrey de Havilland, had expressed his doubts as to their usefulness.

He had even gone as far as to suggest that the type of machine desired could not be produced if it were to comply with these regulations. His firm built no new machine for Lympne in 1924, and he maintained that if an ideal training machine was to be designed, a start must be made on entirely different lines. Two months after the meeting ended de Havilland announced that they were at work on a light aeroplane. It conformed to none of the Air Ministry Lympne rules, but it had folding wings for easy storage, was cheap to build and repair, easy to fly, and strongly built. It was fitted with a moderately powerful engine, that would be sufficient to fly the machine at half-throttle. The name of this new aeroplane de Havilland announced, was to be the Moth.

In February, 1925 they advertised that two Moths were in "an advanced state of construction," and on March 2 G-EBKT, the first of the type was exhibited to the Press at Stag Lane, Edgeware. After it had been examined and its purpose explained Captain Broad took it up and stunted the Moth as if it were a fighting aeroplane. Later he took up several passengers, and proved conclusively that here was a sturdy light aeroplane that could take off quickly, land slowly, and be controlled perfectly in the air.

The news spread rapidly. Everyone in aviation had been waiting to see if Geoffrey de Havilland could justify his rebellious attitude, and within a week, while the Moth was arousing discussion and argument, the Air Ministry and the clubs were invited to visit Stag Lane to see for themselves. Williams and Leeming went on behalf of the Lancashire Club, and after they had flown with Broad in 'KT' were like all other club representatives - clamouring that here was the machine they wanted.

The clubs now began to make themselves unpleasant to the Air Ministry; they must have training aeroplanes quickly or the members could not be held together; the Ministry were committed to provide such machines. With one voice and with varying degrees of impoliteness, the clubs stood round and yelled, "Momma, buy me that!"

The editorials in *The Aeroplane* became more pointed than ever. Meanwhile Broad continued to fly the Moth about the Country, and to emphasize that here was a practical aircraft. Of course, the Air Ministry were in a horrible position. They could not deny that Geoffrey de Havilland had produced an excellent machine or that it would suit the requirements of the clubs. But if they were to order Moths what would the rest of the aircraft industry say? Manufacturers had designed

machines to comply with the Ministry requirements; they had spent much money and time following Ministry suggestions; if now orders were given to a firm that had worked independently altogether.....???

How this knot was cut we are not supposed to know, but on April 16 it was announced officially that the Government would order two complete Moths and one spare engine for the Lancashire, London and Newcastle clubs. A similar order would be placed later for the Midland and Yorkshire clubs.

At about this time Sir Sefton Brancker said "It's no good talking like a lot of old women - what we've got to do is to get on with the flying."

Part Four

With the official announcement on April 16 the Club's position cleared considerably. It had an aerodrome to go to at Woodford; the loan of a hangar in which to put any machines that might come; the LPW was making good progress, and Wood and Hall were getting the secretarial side of the club on to a proper basis. The Committee began to take quite a firm attitude with the members who did not pay their subscriptions, and some of the creditors who had been pressing for payment of their accounts received some pretty nasty letters from the Secretary.

Salthouse summed the new position up. "You want to tell 'em laddie," he instructed Wood, "that we've got bags of aeroplanes and that we're a sort of Government show now. They can't expect a Government to bother with every twopence-halfpenny account that comes in. You want to be firm with 'em, laddie."

It was about this time that the Air Ministry began to show some concern about the machines they had ordered. It had occurred to someone that if these were handed over to a crowd of amateurs, who would promptly try to take them into the air and teach themselves to fly, the machines might not last very long. Possibly the clubs might come to a premature end in a blaze of unwelcome publicity mingled with criticism of those who had given the aeroplane and therefore been the cause of the untimely demise.

A conference was called, and various precautions were insisted upon. Each club was to employ at least one qualified ground engineer. No machine was to fly until this ground engineer, who would be responsible to the Ministry, had certified it as being in a safe and airworthy condition. The voluntary instructors (full-time paid instructors were unthought of in those days) were to be qualified pilots holding a "B" licence; and as the newly formed clubs had among their members hardly a single pilot so qualified, the Ministry offered to take two persons from each club and give them a month's intensive training at Central Flying School. People so trained were to agree to act as voluntary instructors, giving a reasonable amount of time to teaching others.

In the case of the Lancashire Club two worthy souls volunteered to help; both had been pilots in the War and both were still members of the Reserve. It was not easy to find two people able and willing to devote a considerable portion of their time to the nerve-racking job of teaching others to fly. However the Club was lucky in obtaining the services of Scholes and Cantrill. It was their help at this critical juncture that enabled the Club to start.

It is true that one of them confided afterwards that he never remembered volunteering. Upon receiving an official note from the Air Ministry instructing him where to report, he concluded that another war had broken out and that he was being recalled to the Reserve. He said that having shown the note to his employers and said good-bye to his relations, he departed, entirely unaware of the real purpose of his training. Anyway the club got our two instructors, and in due course they did some exceptionally useful work.

As a paid ground engineer was far beyond our means, Tom Prince volunteered to go to Woodford in the evening and sign the aircraft out for use on the following day. He continued to do this essential and laborious work right up to the time when the Club felt justified in engaging a full-time paid ground engineer.

The weeks slipped by while all the various details for starting at Woodford were being completed. There were hundreds of difficulties to be overcome, dozens of complicated arrangements which required tactful handling. Let it suffice that a great deal of hard work was put in and that two or three members provided the necessary cash out of their own pockets.

Then at last the great day came when the club's first Moth was to be delivered. It was to fly from Stag Lane to Woodford, and arrangements were made to give it a great reception when it landed. All the members were urged to bring as many friends as possible; notices were put in the Press inviting the public. As hardly anyone in the north had then seen a light aeroplane, a large crowd was expected. The landing and reception were timed for seven o'clock in the evening.

It had been decided that as Chairman of the Club, Leeming should go to London and fly with de Havilland's pilot in the machine to Woodford. Let us quote his own words, "So on the evening of June 27 - after considerable argument with the insurance company about who 'covered' my life (an argument which neither side succeeded in convincing the other) I departed for town, and the following day presented myself at Stag Lane. Incidentally, on the way through London I had called at the Air Ministry, and Sir Sefton Brancker had handed me a letter to carry in the machine and read aloud to the waiting crowds on our arrival at Woodford. The contents pointed out the reliability and usefulness of the new light aeroplanes and the desirability of joining our club.

The first thing that greeted me when I arrived at Stag Lane was the news that the engine of our

machine had suddenly developed some trouble. Broad had taken the machine up for a test flight during the morning, and as soon as he landed mechanics had been set to work to discover what was causing the mysterious loss of 'revs'.

All through the afternoon the mechanics searched, and I waited anxiously. I knew that far away at Manchester, as seven o'clock drew near, people would be streaming out towards Woodford to see the first appearance in public of the much-talked-of Lancashire Aero Club. The closing down of Alexandra Park and the various delays in the Air Ministry scheme has caused a number of people to become suspicious. They began to wonder if bluff was not our chief asset. If for any reason we now failed to arrive as advertised, I had no illusions as to what would happen. We were not strong enough to take such a setback; it would be the end of the Lancashire Club, for ridicule would kill it.

de Havilland had no other machine that they could send. There were only three Moths in existence at that time and their own test Moth G-EBKT had gone that morning to Coventry. It was uncertain when this would be back, and the uncertainty continued as the afternoon dragged on.

At five o'clock, two hours before we were due at Woodford, the mechanics discovered the trouble. It was serious; it would take two days to put right. The fields of Edgeware rang with my cries and lamentations. To telegraph Woodford that I could not keep the appointment as arranged meant the failure of all our work. Almost weeping, and certainly swearing most wickedly, I implored the gods to avert this disaster.

Broad endeavoured to soothe me; St. Barbe, de Havilland's sales manager, spoke assurances of a delivery within a couple of days at the most. I refused to be comforted; what they couldn't understand was the harm even one day's delay was going to cause. At 5.25, just as I had accepted the inevitable and was about to wire to Woodford, an aeroplane roared over Stag Lane.

"There's one!" I shouted. "Get him down! Make him go with me!"

Broad peered at the machine that was coming in to land. "It's 'KT'" he said suddenly. "It's Cobham back."

We did some very hurried talking and arranging during the next few minutes. If 'KT' was not our proper machine it was at least a Moth. Probably few at Woodford would realise that a change had been made. Once more, bluff might save the situation. If 'KT' was flown there, formally accepted, and then flown quietly back again the next day, our own Moth could be delivered without fuss as soon as it was ready.

St. Barbe explained the situation to the pilot who had just landed, and introduced me to him. "You'll have heard of him, I expect" he said. "He flew Brancker to India, and he's going to try a long distance flight. Alan Cobham's his name."

Cobham was tired after a double journey to Coventry and back, and a busy day there arranging

an engine for his proposed long-distance flight. But as soon as he understood the position he agreed to fly to Woodford.

We landed at Woodford at 7.30 in the evening, after an uneventful flight in perfect weather. There was quite a large crowd to see the first Moth arrive, and Wood was able to secure several new members.

Only Tom Prince gave any trouble. "Have you signed for this machine?" He demanded. I nodded. "Then we've been done. I knew it would happen. They've framed us. they've palmed off an old machine on you. I tell you it's one painted up. It's been used and—"

"Hush" I implored. "I'll explain later."

"It's not new!" He shouted. "We mustn't take delivery. I'll talk to that pilot!"

I managed to hush him in the end, and the next day the local Press reported and applauded the safe arrival of the club's first Moth. The same day Cobham, after returning the pyjamas and razor I had lent him, flew the machine back to Stag Lane.

That evening my telephone rang, and at the other end was a much-concerned and very worried member of the Club.

"I went down," he stuttered, "thought I'd just have another look at it, and the Moth's gone! It's gone! Just isn't there! The farmer says two men came about eleven o'clock this morning and one of them flew it away."

I was reluctant to explain the matter fully. The editor of a certain newspaper happened to be visiting us that evening, and was sitting within a yard of the telephone. I tried guarded hints and vague assurances.

"But it's gone!" the member kept repeating. "Aren't you going to get the police?" My refusal lost me for ever the respect and support of that member. He was never quite the same with me again.

Part Five.

A further period of waiting followed. The two voluntary instructors were still away at Upavon receiving instructions in the art of teaching others to fly. The second Moth was not ready for delivery until the end of August. However a few events enlivened the period of inaction.

On July 19 the London Aeroplane Club had an official opening. The *Aeroplane* published a photograph of this ceremony with the caption,

"WHAT LANCASHIRE DID YESTERDAY"

Sir Philip Sassoon appeared opening the London Aeroplane Club with various other V.I.P.'s including Sir Sefton Brancker. Entirely unsung the Lancashire Aero Club had already been open for

months. Sir Philip was then Under-Secretary of State for Air, and *The Manchester Guardian* and *The Daily Dispatch* published dignified protests at the shadow he had cast over the older club by assuming that London led the way.

Although controversy such as this may seem trivial, in reality it served a very useful purpose. The indignation was genuine, however the Club benefited, for it had its name brought once more before the public. People read of us, and very gradually - oh, so gradually - began to realise that the Club was in existence.

At the end of August, the Club took delivery of its second Moth G-EBLV and celebrated the event by inviting the public to witness a flying display at Woodford. The LPW careered about the aerodrome under its own power - until the magneto ceased to function. Early in the afternoon a wheel came off one of the Moths while it was in the air; on landing, this machine was carried quickly into the hangar. About tea-time the engine of the second Moth developed valve trouble, and this also stopped work. Fortunately, Bert Hinkler was at Woodford with an Avro 504N, and the knowledge the Committee then gained of running a flying display with only one machine bore fruit at a later date.

Instruction started in earnest the following week. The two voluntary instructors, now back from their course at Central Flying School, divided the members into two groups, and each began teaching his particular section. Almost at once a friendly - and at times not so friendly - rivalry sprang up between the two parties. Which would have the honour of sending the first pupil solo? Which would have the first pupil to obtain a licence? Which would turn out the most pilots? Even the machines came to be recognised as belonging to one particular party. Cantrill taught on G-EBLR and Scholes on G-EGLV. Competition became keen and excitement tense.

Two pupils were considered to be running neck and neck for the honour of 'first solo'. Mark Lacayo from the Cantrill side and Leeming from the Scholes party.

Lacayo and Leeming crammed in all the time they could, and other members of the respective sides gave up their bookings, so that the most likely ones in their teams might have extra practice. It was a vain sacrifice as far as Scholes side was concerned. On Sunday, September 20th 1925, Cantrill got out of his Moth and left Lacayo to carry on alone. The first solo in a Club Moth was made, and Lacayo landed without incident. Flushed with his success, Cantrill sent up another pupil, Alan Goodfellow, and when the evening came the score was: Cantrill 2, Scholes Nil.

The Sunday following the Cantrill triumph, the Scholes side scored its first try when, after three hours and thirty-five minutes instruction, Leeming departed alone into the atmosphere. Determined to redeem to some extent the reputation of his team, at two thousand feet he caused the Moth to perform what he believed were two 'stalled turns'. The anxious instructor, watching from the ground

called them something very different and received such a shock that he had to be assisted into the hangar.

In the next few weeks all sorts of things began to happen to the Club. Sir Charles Wakefield, as he then was, accepted the position of President. The idea of inviting him occurred to Williams. "If we could get him, he'd be no end of use. He gives money away like water." That settled it. The Chairman was instructed with the task of persuading Sir Charles that the Club deserved and needed his support.

Having obtained a President such as Sir Charles, the committee decided that it would enhance the prestige of the Club if it would gather together some of the influential people in the city and show them the new President at our head. Sir Sefton Brancker, supported the plan, and as a result of his promoting a luncheon was arranged at the Midland Hotel, Manchester.

"I'll come myself," Sir Sefton offered, "and if you talk nicely to Wakefield I expect he'll come along too, and probably Letts as well, but you want someone else - someone who'll attract everybody. I'll see what I can do."

It was a great luncheon that one in November. Incidentally, as the Club had hardly any funds, two members paid for it out of their own pockets. It brought all sorts of prominent Manchester people into touch with our effort. People who in the ordinary way never seemed to know that the Club existed stood up and assured us of their keen interest. Some even went so far as to promise assistance. Sir Samuel Hoare, then Secretary of State for Air, was the guest of honour; Sir Charles Wakefield, Sir William Letts, and Sir Sefton Brancker sat with him.

The net result of the affair was the gift of a Moth from Sir Charles and the gift of an Avro from Sir William Letts. In one brief hour the Club's fleet had doubled!

It might have been thought that with all these gifts and all this support from influential personages the Club was now safely established and that our serious worries were behind us. Unfortunately, this proved far from being the case, and the next few months were perhaps the most critical in the Club's existence. In fact, it came very near to closing down altogether.

The trouble was largely caused by the small number of flying hours it was possible to put in. There were not many flying members and most of these had to limit their time in the air when it was costing them thirty shillings an hour. Again, the two voluntary instructors had their own businesses to consider; they could not be always at Woodford. Then when it happened that instructors were at the aerodrome and pupils had money to pay for flying, the weather would step in and make aviation impossible. The optimistic assurance "It will be all right when spring comes" did little to help the immediate crisis. Some of the members could not help wondering if the Club would ever see the spring.

It occurred to someone that if we had a club house and sold drinks it might bring some money in. Visions of the great profits made by breweries encouraged us. The trouble was that the Club had no money to buy even a hut for the pupils to shelter in, much less lay in a stock of liquid refreshment. Twice the Committee tried to make money by running dances, and each time came out worse off than when they had gone in. By the early part of 1926 the position had become desperate, and in February the Committee met with the threat of failure right in front of them.

Debts had accumulated and were still accumulating. Sympathetic and helpful as creditors had been they were bound to take action soon; if not to demand payments of the money owing, at least to refuse further supplies. In fact, it was only by pointing out that with supplies cut off the Club would come to an end, in which case the whole of the debt owing would be inevitably lost, that some firms had been persuaded to keep the Club going so long.

There seemed to be only one possible way in which the Club might pull through and that was by increasing the flying hours. More flying meant more income, more pilots' licences, and therefore more payments from the Air Ministry. (The Club received fifty pounds for every pupil who obtained his licence, provided the pupil had been taught exclusively by the Club.)

It was at this point the Committee decided to engage a full-time salaried instructor. With bankruptcy just round the corner this addition to expenses must have seemed pure madness to any reasonable person, but then the Committee were anything but reasonable people. Only incurable optimists out of touch with reality would ever have dared to get the Club going in the first place.

The Club offered the post of instructor to Neville Stack. The desperate position was made clear to him. It was explained that unless income went up the Club would quickly end: that members must be 'encouraged' - a polite synonym for 'bullied' - to fly; that more new members must be found; that the next few months would be a struggle and a fight, with the possibility of defeat always present. Stack was Irish; he accepted the post gleefully, and two days later was sitting in the tiny hut at Woodford astonishing members with his ukulele.

That ukulele is the thing by which most of the old members remembered Stack. He took it everywhere he went. Some years later when he flew a Moth to India that 'uke', a toothbrush and a razor were his only baggage. On desert aerodromes in Asia Stack sang songs and banged his 'uke' while Arabs marvelled and shook their heads. On almost every R.A.F. aerodrome his music came to be known, and many a Mess President has lied and manoeuvred to detain Stack for just one more 'guest night'.

Some one wrote about him, "I can see him now, sitting on an upturned box in the hangar at Woodford. The yellow light from a single yellow

candle lighting the grinning faces around him while he sang Lehigh Valley, Better than Love, Persian Kitten - breaking off in the middle of a song to laugh so infectiously that we all joined in the interruption too. I can still hear the murmur of, "Go on! Don't stop! Sing Country Vicarage."

An amazing character, temperamental, quick-tempered, a clever composer and musician, a brilliant pilot, a competent if plain-spoken instructor, he pulled the Club through its most critical time. Blarneying the reluctant, chaffing the timid, restraining the over-pushful, laughing over the worst failures, he sent the flying hours up and saved the Club. Like all powerful personalities, he made some enemies and some fervently loyal friends. Class or influence meant nothing to Stack. The man who arrived at the aerodrome in a Rolls-Royce received exactly the same treatment as the man who walked from Prestbury Station. The Lancashire Club owes a great deal to Neville Stack.

In addition to the paid instruction, the Club regardless of where the money was coming from, engaged a full-time ground engineer. The first paid engineer was Goodfellow the brother of Alan Goodfellow, Chairman of the Flying Sub-Committee. When he left, Howard Pixton one of the famous pioneers of early aviation took his place. And when Pixton left came the inimitable Bartram. So the club struggled on, persuading creditors to wait just a little longer, staving off disaster, until at length flying hours began to increase.

A certain energetic member named Caldecott proved to have a genius for finance, and, taking over the complicated and muddled money affairs, established a sound and workable system in place of the chaos that had existed. Under his direction proper book-keeping methods were introduced, accurate costings became available.

Caldecott told the Committee just how much they might spend, and saw to it that his limit was not exceeded. Pilots do not take kindly to restriction and Caldecott's path was not an easy one. "A soulless blighter who thinks of nothing

but saving and cutting down. Wait until I get him up in the air some day!" was one indignant comment. But, fortunately, Caldecott stuck firmly to his principles, and at last the Club's finances were on a sound basis.

In due course Stack left to organise his flight to India in a Moth and in his place came Sam Brown then in turn Baker and finally Hall. All outstanding pilots and brilliant instructors.

All sorts of things happened in those years of building up. Three air pageants were organised and blocked the roads for miles round. A full-time secretary was engaged, a Mr. Atherton, to be at Woodford and assist in clearing up the muddle. A club house was built and furnished - a gift from a certain member - only to find that it was inadequate for growing needs. Following some intermittent efforts on the part of members to keep the building clean and provide teas - efforts that usually stopped when it came to the washing-up stage - a stewardess was engaged. For three long years this worthy woman contrived to meet the erratic demands of the members, and all who remember, knowing the difficulties surrounding her work, will have sympathetic recollections of Mrs. Holland.

Those early workers for the Club: Atherton, harrassed yet polite, trying to convince some member that he must pay cash for his flying; Mrs. Holland struggling to provide lunches while the oil-stove refused to work and the water-pump would not function; Bartrum, our amazing ground engineer, who contrived to keep the machines serviceable under conditions that would have discouraged Lenin himself. Bartrum, who worked all the week to get a machine flying and then saw it, after a few minutes in the air, crashed by some over-eager pupil. Times have changed, and Woodford knows not this band today; yet there may still be some who look back and remember the time when, with the future uncertain and failure very near, a little company of workers strove to keep the Club from disaster.

Obituary

John F. Leeming died on 3rd July 1965 aged 69. The following article appeared in the *Manchester Evening News* :-

Author, aviator, businessman and gardener - Mr John Leeming of Bowdon, who died at the weekend, conquered all four fields with spectacular success during his 69 years.

As an author he was successful for nearly 30 years. He created "Claudius the Bee" who charmed children and grown-ups alike when his adventures were featured in the *Manchester Evening News* before the War. Walt Disney bought the film rights and the Claudius tales were translated into nine languages.

After the War Mr Leeming's novels, written in his own garden studio in South Downs Road, Bowdon, had a steadily growing public. Two of the best known were "It Always Rains in Rome" and "A Girl Like Wigan". "Always Tomorrow" the story of his wartime experiences, sold 100,000 copies as a paperback.

As a pilot he was a legend in the twenties and thirties. His landing on Helvellyn was famous; he was one of the founders of the Lancashire Aero Club and one of the first air "taxi" flyers in Britain.

During the war he was aide de camp to Air Marshal Owen Boyd, and when both were flying in a Wellington in Egypt the plane was shot down over Sicily. As it fell, they threw boxes of gold into the sea.

When a PoW, Flt. Lt. Leeming was eventually freed after feigning madness for nine months - and having all his teeth removed in the process.

As a businessman he described himself as "a reluctant engineer" but he was a managing-director when he retired eight years ago. One of his neater deals was to extract oil from rags and sell the rags.

As a gardener and country-man, he became an expert on delphinium growing and on pedigree pig breeding.

The reason for his success was given by Mr. Leeming himself when he was describing his method of writing a book : "Hard slogging work, with meticulous attention to detail"

Chapter 3

Lancashire Aero Club - 1927/32

by Alan Goodfellow

Part One

John Leeming has written in his usual amusing style of the "LPW" days. I only came into the picture at the end of the LPW period when it was being rebuilt as a powered machine following its crash as a towed glider. With typical optimism its constructors proposed to fly it with a 7 h.p. flat twin Douglas air-cooled engine, regardless of the fact that the design on which it was mainly based had never taken the air with less than 50 h.p.

Woodford Aerodrome, where flying trials were conducted, certainly gave it the best possible chance of flying. For one thing it was far from level and for another it was far from even. By starting from the crest of the hill it was possible to work up a speed of about 40 m.p.h. and to get thrown into the air on hitting one of the ridges. Even with these advantages, I cannot honestly say that I ever achieved a greater distance in flight than in my very amateur efforts at ski jumping!

Had the flying activities of the Club depended entirely on the LPW it is probable that it would have been short lived, but fortunately for us (and for the country) an exceptionally far sighted man was at that time in charge of civil aviation. General Brancker (later to become Sir Sefton Brancker) realised that air mindedness was as important to this country as sea mindedness, and that the best way to achieve this was to get as many people as possible actively interested in flying.

Today, it may seem incredible that such a vision should have been necessary, but in those days aviation was largely discredited. People thought of aeroplanes purely in terms of weapons of war which dropped bombs on civilians, and which ought to be banned, like the atom and hydrogen bombs of today. Such air lines as existed were hardly recognised as a commercial proposition and were certainly not an economic one.

It was thanks to Brancker's vision that the Light Aeroplane Club movement came into existence, and it was thanks to John Leeming that the Lancashire Aero Club became one of the first Light Aeroplane Clubs to be approved for the Government subsidy.

Quite apart from Moth flying, the Lancashire Aero Club had been actively engaged in aviation for some years before the subsidy scheme came into operation. The LPW had a doubtful claim to have flown under its own power, but it certainly flew as a towed glider.

The early days at Woodford are full of memories. Woodford Aerodrome in those days

more or less guaranteed that one's flying should be of an exciting nature. A spinney in the centre of the flying field, coupled with a cunningly concealed pond, were among the hazards. The usual take-off run was up a gradient so steep that there was no hope of becoming airborne before the crest. On reaching the crest it was not uncommon to meet another aircraft, previously hidden from view, which was taxi-ing back after landing.

Taking off to the south offered a choice of alternatives. There was an extremely short take-off run towards the aerodrome road, which involved yanking the aircraft off the ground just before reaching the road, beyond which the ground fell away and enabled the nose to be put down in order to gain flying speed. The alternative was a longer run past the hangars, but this involved a banked turn immediately after passing the hangar in order to get through the gap in the trees.

The prevailing winds called for an approach over the high trees behind the hangar. In order to land short enough, to make use of the uphill slope for braking purposes, it was customary to clear the tree tops by a matter of feet (or inches according to the skill of the pilot.) This fact no doubt accounted for the high standard of proficiency later shown in the Pemberton and Rodman forced landing contests!

Take-offs were further complicated during the first winter (which was a cold one) by the fact that the Cirrus 1 engine in its early form was distinctly temperamental in cold weather. It would run up perfectly on the ground, but just as flying speed was reached the front cylinder (and sometimes the front two cylinders) would cut out, necessitating a hurried descent into the next field. It was this habit which led to the classic remark of Bartram, the Club's ground engineer:- "This 'ere flying wears yer boots out!"

In its early stages the Club had only three qualified pilots, Cantrill, Scholes and later Goodfellow. The first ab initio trained member to be launched solo was Mark Lacayo, and the honour of launching him fell to Cantrill.

As more and more members were launched solo the problem of "crashery" became a major headache. This was due partly to the hazards of the aerodrome and to engine troubles, together with over confidence and lack of discipline on the part of members. There was at that time only one organisation rash enough to undertake the insurance of aircraft, the British Aviation Insurance Group. Managed by Captain A.G. Lamplugh, he had been a war-time flying pupil of mine. It occurred to the Committee that as the Club could obviously

not afford to pay for the cost of repairs, it would be a good idea to transfer this burden to the B.A.I.G. and a specimen policy was called for.

As the Club's honorary solicitor, I perused this document and decided that it required a number of amendments in red ink in order to cover our varied problems. Ultimately the printed form became so coloured with red ink amendments as to be indecipherable, and I therefore re-wrote the policy entirely and sent it back to the B.A.I.G. for approval. The startled underwriter paid a special visit to Manchester to debate the situation. As a result, our war time relationship was re-discovered, and an association was formed which lasted until Captain Lamplugh's death in December 1955. During those early days the Lancashire Aero Club in particular, and the Light Aeroplane Clubs in general, owed a great deal (actually as well as metaphorically !) to Captain Lamplugh and the B.A.I.G. I hate to think how much we must have cost them between us, probably a good deal more than we cost the tax payers in subsidies !

We had no club-house in those days. The hangar, (which leaked badly) was our only shelter while waiting to fly and a temperamental stove our only means of keeping warm. When flying was over for the day we would adjourn to Mother Hooley's (The Davenport Arms) at the top of the Aerodrome Road and warm ourselves with Robinson's Barley wine. The Committee met at the Nag's Head or Sawyers Arms in Manchester, where hot pot suppers constituted almost the sole social activities of the Club.

With bankruptcy staring us in the face we proceeded to engage a full-time flying instructor, Captain Neville T.Stack. Leeming and I went to interview him in London where he was earning good money in a night club dance band. We could not offer him as much as he was earning, and we could only guarantee his first month's salary, but with typical Irish enthusiasm he accepted the job and to him must go the chief credit for the survival of the Club at that period. (Later, he and another member of the Club, B.M.T.S.Leete, were to achieve fame as the first pilots to fly a couple of Moths to India.) By his death in a road accident in Karachi, aviation lost a great personality, but his two sons, one of whom won the Sword of Honour at Cranwell, survived to carry on the flying tradition of the family.

In these early days the Club membership was almost entirely composed of genuine flying enthusiasts, and our idea naturally was that the more flying hours that we could get in, the better our financial position would be. Unfortunately these expectations were not realised, mainly because the form of Government subsidy only operated up to the point where an ab-initio pupil qualified for his 'A' licence; any flying thereafter was unsubsidised.

It therefore became evident that if the Club was to survive it must have a social side which would produce a profit to offset the losses on flying activities. Leeming was the first to recognise this. Just as the main credit for the development of

flying activities (ignoring the early days and the yeoman work of Cantrill, Scholes, Prince and Ainsworth during that period) must go to Neville Stack: so must the credit for the development of the Club's social activities go to John Leeming. It was Leeming who persuaded AVROs to let us have the use of the barn and out-buildings which were converted into a Clubhouse and to which was soon added a fine verandah from which flying could be watched in comfort. Before long the associate or social members of the Club outnumbered the actual flying members, and under the able financial-committee chairmanship of R.E.H.Caldecott, the Club's finances began to assume a more healthy aspect.

The first Government subsidy period of three years came to an end and was replaced by a further subsidy agreement for two years. This gave an incentive to pilots who had qualified for their 'A' licences to remain in flying practice. AVROs produced a rival to the de Havilland Moth in the shape of the Avian, and the Lancashire Aero Club was naturally among the first to put this aircraft into service. Its performance was almost identical with that of the Moth and there were many thrilling races between the two types at the inter-club meetings in which Moths and Avians flew neck-and-neck round the course, and the result depended entirely on the skill of the pilot.

Later on, AVROs produced another training machine in the Cadet, and the relative merits of the Moth and the Avian, or the Tiger Moth and the Cadet, as training aircraft are still debated. Despite AVROs record as designers and builders of training aircraft (the AVRO 504 was probably the most famous training aircraft ever built) I personally believe that the Moth and Tiger Moth were slightly superior to the Avian and Cadet in this capacity.

The Avian and Cadet were both delightful aircraft to fly and were moreover both exceptionally safe, which was a desirable feature as regards repair bills. On the other hand, considered from the training point of view, they were probably a little too safe in the sense that they would forgive a serious error of pilotage and allow the pilot to get away with it, whereas the Moth would not. The AVRO 504 for example, would flick into an involuntary spin if the controls were badly handled during a tight turn and the same was true of the Moth and Tiger Moth. The Avian and the Cadet on the other hand would forgive far more serious mishandling of the controls.

At one time or another the Club used three versions of the famous AVRO 504. The standard rotary engined version; an 80hp Renault engine version ; and the Gosport, a light weight version fitted with the interesting Pobjoy/two stroke radial. The Renault version proved the ideal mount for the ham-handed brigade since it was comparatively heavy on the controls, while the rotary engine 504 gave great pleasure to the writer, who as a first war fighter pilot was more used to flying behind rotary engines than any other type.

With the introduction of the social side and an increased demand for joy rides, especially by

members of the fair sex, a demand for a cabin type of aircraft was created. This was filled by the purchase of a Desoutter high-wing monoplane with a Cirrus Hermes engine. This aircraft, which competed successfully in the England/Australia race, was really far ahead of its time. Despite its limited horse power it could get into the air with four people on board and maintain a cruising speed of well over 100 m.p.h. The only defect that I remember was that it had an extremely noisy undercarriage. This fact, coupled with a rather long take-off run accompanied by a deafening clatter from the undercart, tended to give rise to unfounded doubts as to whether it would stand up to the strain of the subsequent landing. It usually did!

Later still the Lancashire Aero Club became the first club to operate the Cierva Autogiro, built under license by AVROs. A cautious Committee managed to persuade AVROs to lease one to us for six months with an option to purchase. It proved extremely popular, but just before the six months was up one of the rotor blades fell off while the machine was taxi-ing, due to the fatigue failure at the blade root. The option to purchase was not exercised!

During this period the Club had many benefactors, among whom pride of place must go to Sir Charles Wakefield (later Viscount Wakefield) who was the Club's first President, and a most generous benefactor on many occasions. Also "Dobbie" (later Sir Roy Dobson) and A.V.Roe & Co.Ltd. who helped the club in a score of different ways.

Apart from the Club's first honorary flying instructors, Cantrill and Scholes (later assisted by Alan Goodfellow), the club's records included many distinguished pilots who acted as professional instructors. Neville Stack has already been mentioned; he was succeeded by H.A.(Sam)Brown, later to become chief test pilot of AVROs and a famous demonstration pilot. V.H.Baker, perhaps the most famous flying club instructor in the country. 'Gas-pipe' Hall, Tommy Tomkins, Bill Thorpe and last but by no means least the much loved 'Pop' Woodward, who was runner-up to 'Stacko' when the first instructor was engaged. We had the honour of providing the first woman pilot (Miss Winifred Brown) to achieve the coveted distinction of winning the King's Cup Air Race and later were to become the first Club to employ a woman as Chief Flying Instructor (Mrs Gabrielle Patterson).

Meanwhile, despite steady progress in aviation and social activities, the club was not without its difficulties. There were sharp divisions of opinion between those who felt that the flying side of the Club's activities should always be given preference, and those who wished to concentrate on the development of the social side as being the only means of providing the necessary funds. It was probably this conflict, more than any other cause, which led to the parting between John Leeming and the Club. After a long period as Chairman, during which he worked unsparingly for the Club and was largely responsible for its

continued existence, he left to organise a commercial aviation concern (in some respects a rival to the Club) - first at the temporary landing ground at Wythenshawe, and later at Barton Aerodrome. Alan Goodfellow, who was then Chairman of the Flying Sub-Committee, succeeded him as Chairman of the Club, and was followed later by Peter Eckersley.

Finance was a constant source of worry, and at the end of the second subsidy period a new, and in many cases disastrous, development produced fresh complications. An ex-Secretary of State for Air, the Hon. Freddy Guest, had the idea of organising the flying club movement on a commercial basis, thus enabling great economies to be effected and cutting down the Government subsidy. On the face of it, the scheme was an attractive one, and it is not surprising that the Government of the day 'fell for it'. National Flying Services Ltd. was formed to operate the scheme and the existing clubs, by this time over 30 in number, were given the option of being taken over by the new organisation, or of continuing to operate as independant units under the much reduced terms of subsidy granted to the organisation. During the next few years, until National Flying Services Ltd. went into liquidation, many of the original clubs were either absorbed by the organisation, or themselves went into liquidation through attempting to operate on the reduced subsidy terms. The Lancashire Aero Club was among those to survive - but only just.

In 1937, under the threat of the Second World War, there came the first ray of hope. The Government decided to create a reserve of civilian pilots to be known as the Civil Air Guard. The pilots were to be trained by the Flying Clubs on subsidy terms which would enable flying training to be given at extremely cheap rates (in some cases as low as 5/- per hour) and subsequent flying practice was to be maintained at a very low cost. No restriction was placed on the age or sex of members, but each member, on joining, gave an honourable undertaking to serve in a flying capacity in case of war.

The scheme was an immediate, and even embarrassing success. All over the country people flocked to join, but the great snag was lack of aircraft and trained instructors. In consequence the scheme was barely under way when war broke out, and although over 12,000 members had been enrolled, only a little over 2,000 had qualified as pilots. The great majority of these had acquired too little flying experience to be of immediate value to the Flying Services, which were equally hampered by lack of training aircraft and instructors.

A good deal of criticism was levelled at the scheme on the ground that Clubs were accepting women and middle aged men who could be of no value as pilots in case of war. This criticism was falsified by events. It was the younger members whose training was largely wasted, since the Flying Services were unable to absorb them at the outset. By the time they were in a position to do so, they had mostly been absorbed by one of the other Services. The 'women and old gentlemen' whose

training was supposed to have been a waste of time, on the contrary, were nearly all absorbed either by the Flying Services or by the Air Transport Auxiliary, the great aircraft ferrying organisation, as pilots for second line flying duties.

The Lancashire Aero Club had a particularly good record in this respect, providing the largest individual contingent of any Club for the Fleet Air Arm as well as many pilots for the R.A.F. and the A.T.A. There were admittedly a few 'black sheep' among the clubs which treated the scheme purely as a money making concern, but I was fortunate that in my area (I was C.A.G. Commissioner for the North of England) there were few, if any, black sheep, and the Lancashire Aero Club was certainly not among them.

To digress for a moment, the Club's activities during the pre-war period included an experimental spell of gliding, and we were in fact the first of the Light Aeroplane Clubs to take this up. A Prufling single seater glider was imported from Germany and was flown both from Woodford Aerodrome and from various sites in Derbyshire. Subsequently the Gliding Sections of the Lancashire Aero Club, and of the Manchester Branch of the Aeronautical Society which also operated at Woodford, joined forces with the Derby Gliding Club to form the Derby and Lancashire Gliding Club, which is still operating from Great Hucklow in Derbyshire, and is one of the oldest and most successful Gliding Clubs in the country. The moving spirit here was Basil Meads, who after over twenty-five years of active work in the Light Aeroplane and Gliding Club movements (and over six years as a pilot with the Fleet Air Arm in the second world war) was still prominently connected with both Clubs. (Note, Basil Meads subsequently became President of Lancashire Aero Club, but sadly passed away in 1989).

The outbreak of war brought an end to the activities of the Light Aeroplane Clubs. Although, as things turned out, they could with great advantage to the country have carried on with flying instruction for at least another year. They were summarily closed down, and their aircraft requisitioned. (Many years later, after the war was over, they received some financial compensation, though on a scale quite inadequate to compensate for the losses sustained).

In the foregoing notes I have dealt hardly at all with the period from 1933 to the outbreak of World War 11., since during that period my main aviation activities were increasingly connected with the Royal Aero Club, the General Council of Light Aeroplane Clubs, the British Gliding Association, and Aviation Law. I hope therefore that there will be a "Part 111." of this history, contributed by one or more of the members who led the club's activities during that period.

In writing "The First Few Years" Leeming has obviously drawn on his press-cutting albums of the period. I propose to conclude my recollections by drawing on my files of the internationally famous club magazine "The Elevator" for the period 1927/1932.

Part Two

ON THE HISTORY OF "THE ELEVATOR"

So far as is known the Lancashire Aero Club was the first of the Light Aeroplane Clubs to run a club magazine. Starting as a modest little two page news bulletin produced spasmodically by its first Editor, Rex Williams, it took magazine form in March 1927 with a five page issue bound in a blue cover with an excellent illustration of a Cirrus Moth, designed by Rex Williams himself. The cover contained the cautious announcement "Published periodically".

In May 1927 the editorship was taken over by Alan Goodfellow, and in July 1927 it became a definite monthly publication. It continued in its roneo-ed form, duplicated by "the Fair Maid of Smith Premier", with occasional cartoons inserted as loose leaves and with various changes of cover design, until September 1931 when it first appeared in printed form with photographic illustrations.

By January 1932 it had grown to twenty large pages of written matter with illustrations and advertisements, and far outstripped all its rivals. From March 1930 Jim Hembrow (Uncle James to all members of the Club) who had for some time been a regular contributor to the *Elevator*, joined Alan Goodfellow as Editor and they continued together until publication was finally discontinued in 1932 on economic grounds.

Now let The *Elevator* take up the tale.

EXTRACTS FORM "THE ELEVATOR"

March 1927

Flying Sub-Committee Report.

The total flying time of the Club from the commencement of operations up to February 1927 is 1128 hours 35 minutes. The leading members' flying times (dual and solo combined) are:-

1.	Leeming	77 hours 20 minutes
2.	Lacayo	71 hours 20 minutes
3.	Costa	70 hours 20 minutes
4.	Goodfellow	46 hours 50 minutes
5.	Agar	43 hours 5 minutes
6.	Goodyear	40 hours 25 minutes
7.	Hardy	39 hours
8.	Michelson	33 hours 25 minutes
9.	Wilkinson	24 hours 35 minutes
10.	Catterall	24 hours 10 minutes
11.	Benson	24 hours
12.	Williams	23 hours 50 minutes

Certificates of competency in aerobatics are now ready and all qualified 'A' Licence pilots are urged to add this further distinction to their laurels.

No. 1 has been issued to J.F.Leeming.

No. 2 has been issued to A.Goodfellow.

No. 3 has been issued to M.A.Lacayo.

First solo congratulations are offered to Miss Winifred Brown(x), Dr.Wade, Mr.Abdalla and Mr.Crosthwaite..

'A' Licence congratulations to Messrs.Hardy,Birley,Twemlow(xx),Dobson(xxx) Fallon and Slater.

The appointment of Alan Goodfellow as Official Observer for the Royal Aero Club at Woodford is announced.

Note:

(x) Later to become the first woman pilot to win the King's Cup Air Race.

(xx) The well known T.T. motor cyclist.

(xxx) Later to become Sir Roy H.Dobson, Managing Director of A.V.Roe & Co.Ltd.

Messrs. Stack & Leete - These two "Moth-ers" arrived in Delhi last month. Since then they have been taking a well earned rest, but on occasions they have appeared as the star aerobatic turn at various Air Pageants in India, and have taken up many important people on joy rides.

(Note: Mr.T.N.Stack, the Club's chief instructor, and Mr.B.M.T.S.Leete, a Club member, had just achieved considerable fame by flying two Moths from England to India, the first time this feat had been achieved by a light aeroplane.)

A projected Air Carnival

At the invitation of a special Committee in the Isle of Man, Leeming, Cantrill and Goodfellow are going to the Island during the next few days to consider the possibility of a Flying Meeting there.

(Note: In due course this materialised. Goodfellow flew round the Island several times to decide on the course, and the Isle of Man Air Race became one of the most popular meetings of the year).

April 1927.

Clubhouse Notes

It will surprise Members to know that the hooks provided in the hall are for hanging hats and coats. Now that they know, Members will doubtless use them for that purpose!"

(Note: It was so cold at this time that Members

used to keep their flying kit on after going into the Clubhouse after a flight until they had warmed up, when they discarded it in any convenient position on the floor).

"We hear a rumour that on March 31st Mr.Leeming visited the President, Mr. C.C.Wakefield, and that as a result great activities on the Clubhouse front are likely to be observed shortly".

(Note: Rumour was not false on this occasion, and the Clubhouse verandah was not far away.)

May 1927

New Flying Tickets

These come into force on the 15th and will be obtainable in all the latest shades at the following prices:

1. Moth - dual or solo 27/6 per hour.
2. Moth - pilot and passenger 30/- per hour.
3. AVRO 504 - dual, solo, or pilot and passenger 50/- per hour.

(Note: Those were the days!)

Flying Hours.

Up to and including Saturday May 7th the flying times of the six subsidised Clubs were as follows:-

London	2305 hours 5 minutes
Newcastle	1567 hours 5 minutes
Lancashire	1482 hours 30 minutes
Midland	673 hours 30 minutes
Yorkshire	477 hours 40 minutes
Hampshire	392 hours 55 minutes

(The last named Club only commenced flying in August 1926).

Licences

Up to date twenty-seven members have qualified with the Club for their 'A' Licences. At the moment some ninety Members are flying more-or-less regularly.

June 1927.

Flying Hours

Congratulations to Costa and Lacayo on being the first Club Members to pass the 100 hour mark. Twenty-eight Members of the Club have now passed the twenty hour mark.

During its second year (i.e. since July 31st

1926) the Club has already done over 1000 hours flying. The only other Club to achieve this as yet being London.

July 1927

The editorial report on the formal opening of the Clubhouse extension by Sir William Letts, followed by a flying display, read as follows:-

"There was a landing competition, won by Mr.Costa, and a balloon bursting competition, won by the balloons. There was also some very fine flying on Avians by Messrs. Bert Hinkler (x) Dudley Watts (xx) and H.A.Brown (xxx). There was some very excellent organisation under Mr.Caldecott, the Chief Marshall. In fact it only needed a crowd to make the show completely successful!".

(NOTE:

(x) AVROs chief test pilot and the holder of many fine records, especially on the "AVRO Baby", a forerunner of the Light Aeroplane type, which was before its time. He was killed in attempting to break his own record on the flight from London to Australia.

(xx) Otherwise known as "Dangerous Dan", a well known amateur racing pilot, and a familiar figure at all the Race Meetings of the time in his SE5.A. of first War vintage.

(xxx) "Sam" Brown, the second Chief Instructor of Lancashire Aero Club, later to succeed Bert Hinkler as AVROs chief test pilot and to become a very well known demonstration pilot.)

The Club was still lying third to London and Newcastle in flying hours with a total of 1832 hours 35 minutes. The Club had taken delivery of its first AVRO Avian (in place of the Gosport) and the flying rate had been fixed at 30/- per hour.

Poetry (?) was beginning to find a place in The Elevator - e.g.:-

Little Willy taking off,
Pulled the stick into his tummy,
Heard the engine start to cough,
Pitot showing nought,
"That's rummy",
"Very rummy".
Said our Willy,
(Coroner said "Very silly.")
At 2,000 feet you have plenty of height
At 500 feet you have not;
And the reason that Johnny has gone from
us quite
Is simply because he forgot.

And finally

Plane was dud,
So was he;
In the mud,
R.I.P.

September 1927.

The greater part of this issue was devoted to a description of the Hooton Park Pageant organised by the Lancashire Aero Club for the purpose of founding the Liverpool Aero Club, later to become a friendly rival.

Other Clubs started by the Lancashire Aero Club were the Southport and District Aero Club, which lasted up to the outbreak of World War 2, and the Blackpool and Fylde Aero Club, which is still in existence.

October 1927.

Crashery was becoming a serious problem and the monthly editorial opened as follows:-

"There is an old saying that the man who never makes a mistake never makes anything. Judging by our crash record during the past few months our Members seem to have adopted this saying as a slogan!"

The House Committee notes include the following mournful comment by Mr. Nelson, the House Sub-Committee Chairman:-

"We should like to draw attention quietly to the amount collected for new gramophone records when last taken. 5/10d in cash, including one half crown, one button, one French centime, and a quantity of French Chalk".

November 1927

The habits of certain Members led to the publication of the following problem:-

"Three pilots, J.S., M.A.L. and H.H. are flying from A., a point in Lancashire, to B., a point in Yorkshire. The distance between the two points in a straight line being 60 miles. All three start simultaneously on machines of the same type and speed. Assuming that J.S. lands once in Norfolk, and once in Cumberland to ask the way; that M.A.L. stops to give an aerobatic display over the houses of his friends and relations within fifty miles of the course, and that H.H. lands for a noggin at every pub with a suitable field en route. Which pilot will reach B. first, if any?"

December 1927

The *Elevator* records the formation by the Royal Aero Club, of the General Council of Light Aeroplane Clubs which had just held its first meeting, and at which fourteen Clubs had been represented.

Internally, the Clubhouse matters were giving trouble, and the House Committee notes commenced as follows:-

Chairman - "Hanged if we know! We have been unable to keep place with the recent kaleidoscopic changes." - The correspondence included the following letter to the Editor:-

"Sir,

Should fat members be allowed in the Club? I venture to suggest that they should not. There are two reasons. First, that they make extra work for the engines and undercarriages. Secondly, when they get in a semi-circle round the fire, they form a possibly picturesque, but certainly unnecessary, fireguard. If I write coldly of them it is because I am cold.

Yours faithfully,
Icicle."

January 1928

On January 27th the Club gave a Luncheon at the Midland Hotel in honour of Sir Sefton Brancker, Director of Civil Aviation. The Lord Mayor of Manchester presided. The toast of "The City and Trade of Manchester" was proposed by Sir Sefton and responded to by the Lord Mayor and the President of the Chamber of Commerce. General Groves of the Air League proposed the health of the Club, which was answered by Sir William Letts.

NOTE: This was probably the Club's social highlight to date. As usual Leeming was responsible for organising the event.

The appointment of Captain V.H.Baker, as Flying Instructor in place of Captain H.A.Brown was announced, the latter having succeeded Bert Hinckler as chief test pilot to A.V.Roe & Co.Ltd. Like "Stacko" and "Sam" Brown, Baker was an immediate success. In due course he was to go on to Heston and to become perhaps the most famous Club Instructor with many notable people among his pupils. He was also to invent the famous Baker ejection seat which saved the lives of many fighter pilots but alas, did not save his own.

The same edition reported that Howard Pixton, the famous pioneer pilot who first won the Schneider Trophy for this country in 1912, was joining the Club temporarily as a ground engineer to bring himself up to date on maintenance work.

March 1928

The death of Flt/Lt. Kinkead while attempting to set up a new World speed record in the Supermarine S.5. was recorded with deep regret. Kinkead became a Service Member of the Club while stationed at Sealand, and did a considerable amount of Club flying including brilliant aerobatic displays at Club Meetings. He was one of many distinguished pilots who became Members of the Club because they liked its atmosphere.

Others included Bert Hinckler and Kingsford-Smith (Smithie), the two Australian Pilots who between them had accomplished almost all the finest long distance flights of the period. Also Captain Lancaster, another famous long distance pilot, and Flt/Lt. Carr and Squadron Leader d'Aeth, pilot and navigator respectively of the Fairey Long Range Monoplane, which set up a new World distance record. It is a sad thought that of these pilots only Carr (later Air Chief Marshal Sir Roderick Carr) was still alive in 1956. All the others lost their lives on long distance record attempts.

Club membership was leading to private ownership and the issue records an accident to Mr.Anderson's aircraft and the recruitment of Miss Winifred Brown and Mr.Costa to the ranks of private owner Members.

April 1928

The editorial records the first of many friendly clashes with C.G.Grey, the famous editor of the *Aeroplane*. "C.G.G." had written:-

"One would very much like to know how many of the men women and children who have qualified as pilots at the various Clubs would be of the slightest use in time of War. The women, of course, would not be used. Some of the men are too old, and probably a number of others would not pass the doctor."

The *Elevator* retorted:- "Reading the foregoing, and becoming deeply depressed with the feeling of uselessness, we took the trouble to go through the list of the pilots in this Club and worked out the following approximate table of percentages:

Women (including ladies) 4%

Children (including all below military age) - nil return.

Greybeards (including all above military age)
4%

P.B.A's (that stands for Potential British Aces - not what you thought it did!) 92% Subject to an allowance for several members who could be considered not quite right in the head."

(NOTE: Events were to prove C.G.G. lamentably wide of the mark. Not only the Women, but also the Greybeards were to acquit themselves honourably as second line pilots in the A.T.A. when World War Two came along).

June 1928

This was the year of the great Blackpool Air Pageant organised by the Club, probably the biggest air display ever given in this country outside the R.A.F. Pageant at Hendon. The list of officials given below includes nearly all the most prominent Members of the Club at the time:-

Chief Marshal - J.C. Cantrill
Clerk of the Course - A. Goodfellow
Reception of distinguished visitors - J.F. Leeming
Joy riding - R.E.H. Caldecott
Competitors machine park - A.C. Mills
Exhibition pilots - R.H. Dobson
Exhibition machine park - C.J. Wood
Starting Line - T. Prince
Turning Points - A.J. Emery
Billeting and accommodation - F. Ruddy
Balloon Bursting Contests - Dr. D.R. Goodfellow

The Judges were:-

Mr. John Lord (x)
Alderman J. Potter, J.P.
Squadron Leader de Haga Haig and
Flt/Lt. R. Carr (xx)

The Stewards of the Meeting were:-

Mr. A.V. Roe (xxx)
Col. M.O. Derby, and
Captain A.G. Lamplugh (xxxx)

These were the leading officials, but altogether the Club provided something like 150 voluntary officials of one kind and another. Fifty aircraft entered for the Races, nearly 100 R.A.F. machines took part in the brilliant R.A.F. Display, and individual pilots giving aerobatic displays included the demonstration pilots of AVRO, de Havilland and Blackburn.

Also appearing were Fieseler, the famous German inverted flying expert; Bernardi, the Italian winner of the Schneider Trophy and the holder of the World's air speed record; Atcherley, a member of the British Schneider Cup Team whose exhibition of very low upside down flying in a light aeroplane just about stole the show, and several other members of the British Schneider Cup Team and of the R.A.F. Hendon Display Aerobatics Team.

The organisation of this Meeting, which was attended by a crowd of some 65,000 was probably the high-light of the Club's history.

NOTE:

(x) Then Managing Director of AVROs and later of Saunders Roe Ltd.

(xx) Later to gain the World's long distance flight record, and to become Air Chief Marshal Sir Roderick Carr, the first Commandant of the new London Airport.

(xxx) Later Sir Alliot Verdon Roe, the pioneer pilot and founder of AVROs.

(xxxx) Underwriter and Principle Surveyor of the British Aviation Insurance Co. and the pioneer of British Aviation Insurance.

This issue recorded that apart from the original Lancashire Aero Club, which was formed at Blackpool in 1908 there was also a Manchester Aero Club formed in 1910 of which three members, Mr. Butler, Sir Kenneth Crossley, and Mr. Philip Heys had now joined the Lancashire Aero Club.

August 1928

For some obscure reason the colour of the *Elevator's* cover was changed from blue to red, which gave rise to "An Ode in the Modern Style" as follows:-

"The *Elevator* - when it first greeted an astonished World under the editorship of Mr. R.R. Williams

Had a cover of chaste, stainless and indisputable white;

And this, when you consider the extremely high moral standard and exquisite taste of the articles which used to appear in it,

You will admit was not only appropriate, but also unquestionably and indubitably right!

Later, when Mr. Goodfellow took over the editorship and things began to alter considerably,

The cover was immediately changed to blue; And bearing in mind the kind of stories, alleged poetry and other matters which the Editor invented or passed for publication, It was a rather appropriate colour too!

And now that he has been running it for a year and we were just about beginning to get used to his style and able to put up with it,

The cover has suddenly become scarlet; I wonder what worse that portends - The Varlet!"

September 1928

Captain Baker left to take the "plum" post of Chief Flying Instructor at Heston and was succeeded temporarily by Flt/Lt. H.C. Todd, a very experienced ex R.F.C. and R.A.F. Instructor.

The issue records the presentation of a Trophy by a member, Mr. George Pemberton, for a forced landing competition. This was followed soon afterwards by a similar Trophy from another member, Mr. Rodman. The Rodman Trophy was allocated for the senior competition, limited to pilots with more than 100 hours solo experience.

The Pemberton Trophy was open to all not eligible for the Rodman. The competitors were accompanied in both competitions by an instructor as safety pilot and adjudicator.

For the Pemberton, competitors were required to land without the engine from a height of 1000 feet over a tape 100 feet long and 4 feet above the ground, representing a hedge, and to pull up without the use of brakes (there were none anyway before reaching a line 200 yards away marking the far boundary of the field. Points were awarded for style of approach, style of landing and distance. The rules for the Rodman were the same except that in this case competitors had to land between the four foot tape and another tape stretched 16 feet above it, representing a line of telegraph wires.

The Rodman and Pemberton contests became a very popular quarterly event, and did much to improve the standard of flying in the Club.

October 1928

Records the first contest for the Pemberton Trophy which was won by a very promising Club trained pilot, R.F.Hall ("Toffee") with 23 points out of a possible 30. B.A.G.Meads with 22 points and M.A.Lacayo with 22 points were close behind him.

(NOTE: In view of C.G.G.'s criticisms referred to earlier, it is interesting to note that five of the leading six competitors finished up as pilots in the R.A.F. or the Fleet Air Arm during World War 2).

This issue records the resignation from the Club of the last of the trio of pioneers who built the LPW and started the Club. Tom Prince and C.J.Wood had already left the district. Now J.F.Leeming, who had been the Chairman and moving spirit of the Club for more than five years, resigned to devote his attention to the commercial side of aviation. Some of his publicity stunts had given rise to criticism from time to time and some of his subsequent commercial activities, which were felt to be in competition with the Club, were also to be criticised. Nevertheless as the *Elevator* truthfully remarked in this issue:- "We should do ill to forget that the Club would never have attained to its present status and position but for his efforts. We shall not easily find his like".

November 1928

Alan Goodfellow became acting Chairman of the Club and John Leeming was elected a Vice-President in recognition of his past services. Jack Cantrill succeeded Goodfellow as Chairman of the Flying Sub-Committee. D.E.("Gaspipe")Hall was appointed Chief Flying Instructor.

December 1928

Special Club Christmas Cards were announced for the first time.

January 1929

A somewhat melancholy editorial reviews the past twelve months. The Club fleet of aircraft down from five to three; flying hours for the year down by about 350. Club overdraft much the same; marriage of J.J.Scholes interfering with his work as voluntary flying instructor; resignation of the Chairman J.F.Leeming, and the Chairman of the Finance Sub-Committee, R.E.H.Caldecott; formation of the North Staffordshire Aero Club which meant the loss of a keen group of flying members resident in that area. Formation of National Flying Services Ltd, as a formidable commercial competitor. Altogether a gloomy and discouraging prospect.

February 1929

The *Elevator* devotes no less than six pages to a discussion on the formation of National Flying Services Ltd., and the implications for the independent Clubs, and is sharply opposed to an editorial in the *Aeroplane* which welcomes the new concern and criticises the existing Clubs. A letter appears in the local press in the names of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of N.F.S. inviting support for a local flying club to be formed by that body!

March 1929

The start of two courses of Lectures on air navigation and meteorology by Mr. C.B.Collins, a Member of the Meteorology Department of the Air Ministry who was obtaining his 'A' Licence with the Club, was announced. These proved a great success and the Club was extremely fortunate in its lecturer.

In this issue began a new series of scurrilous rhymes by the Editor entitled "Members in Verse". The first verse shows what members had to put up within those days:-

Under the spreading Chestnut tree the village
smithy stands

The Smith a mighty man is he with large and
sinewy hands,

But nowadays he's out of date, or so one
understands

For now beneath enamelled signs, twixt pumps
of green and red,

The village motor engineer is standing in his
stead,

And the muscles of his swelling tum are soft as
new made bread!

April 1929

The decision to build an Airport for Manchester at Barton led to some controversy between Leeming and Goodfellow. The former being a strong supporter of the scheme, whereas the latter had considerable doubts as to the suitability of the site.

The Editor was evidently attending the navigation lectures by Mr. Collins and burst into a song of which the first verse and chorus read as follows:-

Cassini was a Sheeny, or he may have been an Ite.

Or perhaps he was a Frenchman, but we think he was a Twite.

For by means of measured bases he could plot all sorts of places,

Whereas we poor Woodford Aces never get the answer right.

Chorus:

With a yo heave ho and a Rhumbelow

As we steer for the (iso)-bar

Oh fie, oh phi, you are too 'pi'

And likewise 2 pi r

A cirle's great and a rhumb line's straight

According to Mercator,

And Bradshaw he

Means nothing to me

For I am a Navigator

Harry Stern has passed his 'A'

Sing ta-ra-ra-boom de-ay;

Late in 1963

He intends to get his 'B'

(NOTE: In January 1956 Harry Stern was Gazetted Hon. Colonel of the Ninth Manchester's, a great honour. There was still time for him to achieve the prophecy mentioned above, but he was leaving it rather late!)

"The Diary of a Man about Spain" records the flight of Sam Brown and Goodfellow from Woodford to Madrid to deliver an Avian to a Spanish nobleman. The route seems to have been a somewhat devious one, and included several days under "open arrest" following a forced landing on the East Coast of Spain. It only terminated after they had taken the entire population of the village (including the local police) up for joy rides.

The issue records that Blackpool will be a stopping place for the King's Cup Air Race, and that the Club will organise a two day Flying Display on July 5th and 6th at Squires Gate Aerodrome in connection with the Race.

An essay by the eight year old son of one of our flying members is published as follows:-

How an Aeroplane is made and flies.

An aeroplane is made of wood bars at four corners of the body or fuselarge with canvass all round it. On the ends of the wings there is a piece of them that is hinged on to the wings and has wires from it to the cockpit where it is controlled by the joystick. The ones on the front wings are called aerolones and the ones on the back wings are called elevators.

The ones on the back wings make the aeroplane go up or down together, whereas the ones on the front wings go up or down in opposite directions. There is another important thing which is the rudder and is controlled by wires to the rudder bar in the cockpit. The aerolones and rudder when in the air are used together, and aeroplanes always bank when turning.

The hardest part of ordinary flying is learning to land.

J.M.

The editorial comment was:- "He must have learnt that last bit by watching father".

(NOTE: The Mills family were to provide the Club's third example of father and son flying together in World War Two., A.C.Mills as a pilot in the Fleet Air Arm, and his son John Mills as a pilot with Coastal Command R.A.F. The other two were T.N.Stack and A.Goodfellow with two flying sons apiece).

May 1929

It is recorded that the popular Mark Lacayo was going to try for his 'B' Licence, the first Club trained pilot to do so. As a rude contributor puts it in verse:-

Mark is going for his "B"

Cannot use the C.D.G.

A.N.O.? don't know a thing !

Compasses he cannot swing.

Still, I think he will pull through,

Night stuff he will have to do,

Won't we have a spot of fun

If at Woodford it is done!

Another popular member who was doing sterling work on the House Committee is mentioned by the rhymester:-

June 1929

Private ownership by Club Members had increased to a point where the *Elevator* announced the introduction of a maintenance scheme for private owners' aircraft.

Flying facilities were being provided both at the temporary landing ground at Wythenshawe and at Southport for the use of Members from these districts.

July 1929

The second Blackpool Pageant organised by the Club was held on July 6th and 7th. On this occasion the Pageant was confined to civil aircraft only, of which there was a very good attendance, but shocking weather on both days kept the attendance of the public down to less than 5000. Apart from some very fine aerobatics displays by Service Members of the Club, the chief features of the programme were various types of flying contests, some of them of a novel character.

August 1929

The published Report of the Annual General Meeting showed that Membership was 280 and that the Club's debit balance, which had been as high as £1350, had been reduced to less than £350. This was largely owing to the good work of Caldecott as Chairman of the Finance Committee.

Alan Goodfellow resigned from the Chairmanship and was elected a Vice President, his place as Chairman being taken by P.T.(Peter)Eckersley, H.D. Whitehouse succeeded B.A.G.Meads as Chairman of the House Committee and Mr.Nelson took over the Finance Committee.

September 1929

A very successful Club Garden Party was held, which included a number of novel flying competitions. The issue included a report on the Schneider Trophy contest in which the United Kingdom was again victorious. Regretably Goodfellow, as a turning-point observer, had the melancholy duty of disqualifying Atcherley, a fellow member of the Club, who was flying one of the new Supermarine S.6's, owing to a short turn.

October 1929

The editorial was devoted to the end of the second Air Ministry Subsidy Agreement period and recorded that as against the five original State Assisted Light Aeroplane Clubs, there were now thirteen. The total membership had increased from 780 at the end of 1925 to over 5000 by October 1929. The number of Club pilots trained ab initio to 'A' Licence standard in 1925 had been 12; for 1928 the figure had been 475, and it was certain that this would be beaten in 1929. The annual flying hours had increased from 727 in 1925 to 12,201 for 1928. Altogether by the end of 1928 there were 76 Light Aeroplane Clubs in the British Commonwealth, of which 26 were in the United Kingdom, 10 in Australia, 16 in Canada, 9 in New Zealand, 8 in South Africa, 4 in India and one each in East Africa, Singapore and the Irish Free State.

Some reminiscent notes on the Club's history included the fact that G-EBMQ, the Moth presented by the President, was nearly four years old and had flown 100,000 miles. (The same alas could not be said of its predecessors, which had been sold or written off in crashes.)

There was an appreciative article on the Aviation Section of the Automobile Association which was beginning to render excellent services to private owners and at Aviation Meetings. At a later stage a threatened quarrel between the Royal Aero Club and the A.A was nipped in the bud by the formation of a joint R.Ae.C./A.A. Standing Committee.

November 1929

Arthur Ainsworth, who with Tom Prince acted as voluntary ground engineers to the Club in its early days, was made a Life Member.

December 1929

James Hembrow, F.R.I.B.A. alias 'Uncle', alias 'Artistide' was just beginning his series of delightful and humorous contributions in prose and verse to the *'Elevator'* and was soon to join Goodfellow as joint Editor. The December issue includes typical contributions in prose, "Artistide flies the Channel" and in verse, "A poet gets personal". The letter includes references to so many of the leading Club personalities of the time that it is worth quoting in full:

- 1 "We love our little Alan in his natty knickerbockers
And his lovely knobbly knees which look like neogothic knockers.
If only lady pilots would adopt this charming fashion
Air-mindedness would soon become a universal passion."

2. "We love our little Chris, he looks so cheery and cherubic,
We have to work his weight out as a sphere,
cos he's not cubic.
And when he and Aristide get in 'QL to have a go
We all have bets on whether she'll get off the deck or no."

3. "We love our little Fred although he isn't really Ruddy
He puts us in good tempers when we're feeling simply frightful;
He has a taste for buttonholes and glows with sex appeal
And he's absolutely marvellous at landing on one wheel."

4. "We love our little Harry too although he must be Stern
He can take a joke against himself and crack one in return.
We like his hose, his nose, his clothes, his bows, his dogs, his cats.
But Oh my goodness gracious me, where does he get his hats?"

5. "We love our little Jacko with his chin like old Gibraltar
There isn't much about his genial self we'd like to alter
But when he makes appointments, we wish he'd make it clear
Which week or month he'll keep 'em, or at any rate which year."

6. "We love our little John he's always true to his ambition
He won't cry stinking fish however doleful the condition
He nearly becomes human when he comes and bites and sups,
But fancy the young blighter pinching both those bally cups."

7. "We love our little Ken but not when he is in his motor
We tried one time to follow him but hadn't an iota
And considering the dash he showed when distancing us three
We cannot understand the folks who say that he's T.T."

8. "We love our little Marky and his saxophone melodious
He adds a tone we never had, comparisons are odious
But when he plays his saxophone we're always scared to fits
He'll forget it's not an aeroplane and crash the thing to bits."

9. "We love our little Peter and his beautiful suede jumper
We like to see his smiling face behind a foaming bumper
He's only got one plane and says he can't afford not more
It must be simply terrible to be so frightfully poor."

10. "We love our little Rex and like his beautiful blue bonnet
He ought to have a harp and wings embroidered nicely on it,
But his passengers feel much more comfy, cosy and at ease
Since he's chucked his old proclivity for pruning growing trees."

11. "We love our little Steve although he does look apostolic
We love too when we're feeling well to join him in a frolic
But we always wake up after with a feeling of repletion,
Cos Stephen always "leaves all clean and perfect on completion."

12. "We love our little Win cos she's mischievous and bonny
We'd get a word in edgeways if it wasn't for our Ronnie,
And we'd tell her how in Asia little girls are often hanged
From climbing in through windows when the Uke is being twanged!"

13. "At this the festive season we eschew emotions shoddy
We love the sun we love the stars, we dote on everybody
We even love the Income Tax Collector with his claims
And Auntie's pet canary, Bart, the cat, and Uncle James."

J.H.

(EXPLANATORY NOTE:)

1. Alan Goodfellow, with reference to the fact that he was a Rover Scout and frequently flew in his Rover uniform.
2. Chris Mills, a very keen flying member, shortly to become Chairman of the Flying Sub-Committee.
3. Fred Ruddy, another keen flying member who in due course also became Chairman of the Flying Sub-Committee.
4. Harry Stern, who was doing valiant work on the House Committee.
5. J.C. Cantrill, who did magnificent work for the Club as Honorary Flying Instructor.
6. John Leeming. The reference is to the fact that he had recently won both Cups in the Model Aeroplane Contest.
7. Ken Twemlow, the famous T.T. motor cyclist, later killed when flying with the R.A.F.
8. Mark Lacayo, the first Club trained member to be launched solo, the first to obtain his 'B' Licence, the leader of the Club Dance Band. Killed in a Mosquito crash after flying almost right through World War II.

9. Peter Eckersley, the popular Captain of the Lancashire County Cricket team and later to become the equally popular Chairman of the Lancashire Aero Club. Killed while flying with the Fleet Air Arm in 1940.

10. Rex Williams, one of the very early members of the Club and the first Editor of the *Elevator*. The reference to "pruning growing trees" refers to an unfortunate incident during low flying practice.

11. Stephen Wilkinson, F.R.I.B.A., the County Architect for Lancashire and responsible for all the cartoons which appeared in the *Elevator*. A Balloon pilot in World War I.

12. Miss Winifred Brown, the Club's first woman pilot and the first of her sex ever to win the King's Cup Air Race. Later to marry "Ron" and become an authoress, famous for her "*Little Ship*" Exploits.

The reference to Bart in the concluding verse is, of course Bartram, the Club's first paid ground engineer, a typical and delightful character.

The end of the year saw the resignation of Mr. F.W. Atherton, the Club's first paid secretary. He was replaced by "Jimmy Burgess" (ex Colstream Guards and Royal Flying Corps) who was to prove very popular.

Imaginary Christmas greetings to the Club from various distinguished sources were quoted in this issue. That from the Club's Insurers read as follows:-

"Please note that the office will be closed on December 25th (Christmas Day) and December 26th (Boxing Day). Your crash reports for these days should be telegraphed as early as possible on the 27th".

January 1930

A proposal to start a gliding section of the Club had been approved and a Sub-Committee consisting of Dobson, Goodfellow, Hembrow and F/O Tomkins (Assistant Flying Instructor) was formed.

Both Don(Gaspipe)Hall and H.A.(Sam)Brown had been involved in rather serious flying accidents, but the *Elevator* was able to record that they were both making satisfactory progress to recovery. Also recovering, was Bartram (Bart) the ground engineer, who was involved in one of the accidents.

A review of the subsidy position showed that during the first year of the new scheme the Club had earned £1563.15. - and during the second year £1781 (as against a maximum possible of £2000 p.a.). During 1929, the Club had carried out 3,721 flights and the total flying time was 1228 hours 35 minutes.

This issue included the first of "Steve's" cartoons, with the Editor as the first victim.

February 1930.

It was reported that the Club's President Sir C.C.Wakefield was included in the New Year's Honours List and had become Lord Wakefield of Hythe.

The resignation of J.C.(Johnny)Cantrill from the Committee and the Chairmanship of the Flying Sub-Committee owing to his leaving the district was recorded with deep regret. He had served the Club both as Honorary Flying Instructor and in Committee work ever since the Club began to fly at Woodford. With his fellow voluntary instructor J.J.(Joe)Scholes, he will always deserve to be remembered among the pioneers of the Club.

Humorous jingles were a common feature of the *Elevator*, but for once the Editor (no doubt beginning to feel his age !) let himself relapse into serious verse as follows:-

AUTUMN

When I am old, with sight and touch declining,
Shall I burn futile lights before my shrine?
Shall I, wonder, spend my days repining
For those past glories when the air was mine?

The air - untrustworthy but loved, cleft but
unmastered, -
The friend and foe alike of all who try
(All - even some hybrid Zeppelinian bastard,
Fish-out-of-water like,) to reach the sky.

Shall I repline, or harken back with gladness
To memories of the feats that used to thrill
In Spring's abandon and Midsummer's
madness,
When Autumn comes to strip me of my skill?

The days of ignorance when, blind,
unknowing,
I flirted with the air and thought it fun -
to find flirtation into passion growing,
Yet dared, unharmed, through art by
knowledge won.

I know nor care not; come what Fate may
harbour
Happy rememberance or frustration's pains,
My love had called - and to her fatal arbour
Needs must I fly while yet my strength
remains.

A.G.

March 1930

This was a great month for the *Elevator* because James Hembrow (Uncle) joined Alan Goodfellow as joint Editor and remained with him in that capacity for the rest of the magazine's history.

The editorial was gloomy since the air

estimates had just been published and indicated that under the new subsidy agreement the Club's income was likely to drop by nearly £1500 a year.

The Irving Parachute Company announced the introduction of a new light parachute, weighing only 18 lb complete, and suitable for use in light aeroplanes.

April 1930

The Prufling glider ordered from the factory in Germany arrived and gliding practice by catapult launching at Woodford began in preparation for hill slope gliding when a suitable site could be found. "Aristide's" brief comment in verse was as follows:-

THE WOODFORD KAPURTLER

"She stood for Alan, and for Tommy fell;
Dobbie next dared and found her dismayed;
Tall Toffee tried - she "though she might as
well" -
Weale wooed her coyly and she lept and
played.
Came Chris, earth trembled underneath his
shoe,
And she said "No! I'm beggared if I do!"

May 1930

By way of contrast to the gloom of the previous issue, the editorial reviewed the progress made during the past five years. It pointed out that in the first two years of operation under the subsidy scheme the Club had lost £1350, but had since then wiped out the debit balance. Instead of the two original Moths it now had three Cirrus Avians and a completely reconditioned Cirrus Moth plus the Prufling glider. In place of a dilapidated canvas hangar and a wooden hut it had a new hangar and its own comfortable Clubhouse. This was in the course of conversion to a real Country Clubhouse with sleeping accommodation, tennis court, cricket nets, clay pigeon range, etc. In place of an overdraft it had a credit balance of several hundred pounds at the Bank.

(The spirit of optimism may have been to prepare members for the news that the annual subscription was going up from £5.5. - to £6.6. - for flying members and from £2.2. - to £3.3. - for ordinary members!).

Uncle James, having been appointed to the Committee of the Gliding Section, was beginning to take an interest in aerodynamics and commented:

"I watched a gull soaring one day,
Its gliding was graceful and strong,
It hovered at will without seeming to sway
A beautiful thing in its snow white and grey
And I knew that the Lord he had made it that
way,
But He'd got its dihedral all wrong!"

World War II was still over nine years away, but it is interesting to note that the Flying Sub-Committee's notes for the month contained the names of six members who were to serve as pilots in the Fleet Air Arm or R.A.F.: Goodfellow, Hall, Mills, Oddy, Meads and Eckersley.

June 1930

The Chairman's report at the Annual General Meeting showed that the Club had 117 Members in regular flying practice, including 67 licenced pilots and 50 under instruction. The total Membership of the Club had increased from 309 to 343 and an Assistant Flying Instructor, Mr. Jack Oliver, had been engaged to assist Mr. D.E.Hall. There were seventeen candidates for the ten vacancies on the Committee and the following were elected in the order named:- R.H.Dobson, P.T.Eckersley, A.Goodfellow, J.Hembrow, B.A.G.Meads, D.Nelson, F.Ruddy, J.C.Sellars, L.A.Sellars, H.E.Whitehouse.

It was reported that the flying hours for the month of May were 226 hours 10 minutes - a Club record, and for the week ending 7th June were 74 hours 50 minutes, another Club record. The record for the day was also obtained on June 8th with a total of 20 hours 20 minutes. During the month no less than 19 members had qualified for their pilots Licences, or accomplished successful first solos.

B.A.G.Meads (later to become Chairman of the Derbyshire and Lancashire Gliding Club) was appointed Chairman of the Gliding Sub-Committee and announced that a challenge had been received from the London Gliding Club for a six-a-side gliding match at Ivinghoe Beacon on July 19th.

July 1930

This was a great month for the Club since Win' Brown with another Club member, Ron Adams as navigator had won the King's Cup Air Race and became the first woman pilot ever to do so. A dinner in her honour was held at the Midland Hotel on July 22nd at which the Lord Mayor of Manchester proposed her health.

General Committee Notes reported the election of 34 new Members.

The Club's glider was tried out for the first time from a rather hazardous hill soaring site in the Pennine foothills, and Goodfellow achieved a flight of just under two minutes.

Uncle James celebrated the fact with a poem entitled "We shot our Alan in the air he came to earth we know not where". He was also beginning to take an interest in maintainance as well as aerodynamics and burst into song with:-

"Little bits of paper and little bits of string,
Are what the Frenchman uses in patching up a
wing.
Sometimes he's successful, sometimes he is
not.
But he always puts a pretty little cross to mark
the spot!"

August 1930

The editorial made a reference to the increasing influence on the Club's activities of the lady members. Under the heading "Some Uncleisms" Uncle James commented :- "Women are beautiful in spite of clothes and not because of them". (As he had just got engaged he probably got a raspberry for this)!

The issue contained a full report of the first Interclub gliding match ever held in England between the Lancashire and London Clubs. London won with an aggregate of 12 minutes 45 seconds as against our 8 minutes 7 seconds. However we claimed a moral victory because in the last flight of the day Michelson landed in a tree top and it took nearly half an hour to lower the glider to the ground, practically undamaged, giving a a total time in the air of over 30 minutes!

During practice for the match Messrs. Meads, Michelson, Tomkins and Weale qualified for the glider pilot's 'A' Licence and Goodfellow for the 'A' and 'B' Licence

September 1930

The Inter City Air Race from Liverpool to Manchester and back was won by Flt/Lt. J.B. Allen, Chief Flying Instructor of the Liverpool Club with A.C. Mills of the Lancashire Aero Club a good second. (Mills had just succeeded Ruddy as Chairman of the Flying Sub-Committee).

October 1930

Wing/Cdr. Kingsford Smith had just completed a remarkable record breaking solo flight from England to Australia in an AVRO Sports Avian in less than ten days. This meant that he held the record flying time between England and Australia in both directions; he had accomplished the only successful flight across the Pacific, and was the only Briton who had flown Round the World. *The Elevator* recalled with pride that he, together with

Squadron Leader Bert Hinkler, who made the first solo to Australia, and Captain Lancaster, who made the first solo flight with a passenger, were all three members of the Lancashire Aero Club.

The R.101 disaster with the loss of Lord Thompson, Secretary of State for Air, and Sir Sefton Brancker ('Branx' to everyone in the Light Aero Club movement) cast a gloom over what would otherwise have been a month of rejoicing.

The British Gliding Association had been formed, and an inter-gliding Club contest supported by gliding pilots from six gliding Clubs was held at Ditchling Beacon on October 19th/20th. Members from the London Club won the prizes for the longest flight on each day. On the second day Goodfellow, representing the Lancashire Aero Club, won second prize.

November 1930

Two people closely associated with the Club were killed in flying accidents. Jack Chapman was killed when delivering a new aircraft to Brussels. He learned to fly with the Club while employed as a ground engineer, and on leaving the Club to go to Heston he became a Member.

Harry Bolsover, the chief aircraft inspector of A.V.Roe & Co Ltd, a very good friend of the Club in many ways, was killed in an Imperial Airways crash in France. With him in the same plane was F/O Tomkins, the Club's Assistant Flying Instructor, who was seriously injured, but who crawled over a mile with a broken leg to get assistance for the survivors before he fainted.

On November 1st 'Uncle' James was married to 'Auntie' at Woodford Parish Church. The subsequent reception was at the Clubhouse and a large party of members assembled to wish them good luck on their honeymoon trip to Paris by air.

December 1930

The Elevator included a report which is interesting in retrospect. Goodfellow had been invited to read a paper on the British Light Aeroplane Club movement to representatives of the Light Aeroplane Clubs in France. On his return he reported that although there were some sixty Light Aeroplane Clubs in France, he felt that they could not hope to equal our achievements and lacked the team spirit of the British Clubs. It looks as though things have changed since those days, since twenty-five years later France leads the World in its number of Gliding Clubs, in which a team spirit is absolutely essential.

January 1931

Trouble was brewing in the air racing World over the Royal Aero Club's proposals to limit the King's Cup Air Race to amateur pilots.

The Air Ministry had decided not to make any grant towards the cost of a team for the next Schneider Trophy Race despite the fact that we had won it two years running and only needed one more victory to win it outright.

Quite a few other Light Aeroplane Clubs were publishing journals by this time from which the *Elevator* quoted such extracts as it considered suitable for its readers. A typical quotation this month from *Mersey Air News* read:- "What is the difference between a model woman and a woman model? One is a bare possibility and the other is a naked fact".

A poem entitled "The Old Gang" shows that the younger members of the Club were beginning to feel that some of the older members of the Committee had been there long enough. To quote one verse:-

"The old gang, the old gang,
We like them well enough.
We know they did their best for us and all that
sort of stuff.
But now their time has come to go they
shouldn't cut up rough
Since the young gang are knocking at the
door".

February 1931

Although the *Elevator* was to run about another eighteen months the writing was already on the wall, and the editorial was devoted entirely to its prospects of future survival. For the time being the response proved to be favourable.

March 1931

It was not only the *Elevator* which was coming under the censorious eye of the Finance Committee. This issue records with regret the closing down of the Gliding Section on financial grounds. (The section, however, remained alive as an independent unit and subsequently joined forces with the Derbyshire Gliding Club to form the Derbyshire and Lancashire Gliding Club, which is still one of the leading Gliding Clubs in the country).

April 1931

With the help of Captain Lamplugh of the BAIG (perhaps not entirely disinterested!) an advanced flying training scheme was introduced, together with a senior pilot's badge.

May 1931

The *Elevator* was very critical of the slowness of our Airmail services. As Uncle put it :-

"I don't know why the sound of Mails
Recalls to me the slugs and snails
And Drones and Bumble Bees that buzz -
I only know in fact it does!"

June 1931

The advanced training scheme was going strong and E.W.Bartlett had been engaged as an assistant instructor to help with the scheme.

The Pemberton Trophy was at last won by A.C.Mills after many "near misses"; the Rodman Challenge Cup was, as usual, won by Goodfellow.

July 1931

The *Elevator* was very cross about an attack on the Light Aeroplane Clubs published by the "Air Correspondent" of the *Sunday Express*.

Woodford was one of the turning points for the King's Cup Air Race on July 25th in which Win Brown and Arthur Franklyn, both private owner members of the Club, were our sole representatives this year.

The Clubhouse extensions were almost complete, and it was decided to whitewash the outer walls of the old building with the aid of volunteer members assisted by Goodfellow's Toc-H Rover Scouts. A sprayer was borrowed for this purpose and Uncle James records:- "The sprayer was set to work and the first coat was applied to Mr. H.O.Serck by mistake. It proved, however, that the mixture was satisfactory as it would not come off!"

CONCLUSION

In the last year of its publication (September 1931/September 1932), The *Elevator* reached its peak. Thanks to the kindness of Mr. Sever of Charles Sever Limited, it actually came out in print with photographs, diagrams, cartoons etc., at an average of twenty pages per issue, including articles by several leading aviation writers.

October saw the first Contest for the magnificent Hart Trophy presented by Edgar W.Hart for a landing contest between the Lancashire and Liverpool Aero Clubs. Goodfellow, Mills and Lacayo were our senior team, and Bailey, Hallam and Collinge our junior team. Lancashire won by five matches to one and 164 points to 134.

On November 28th the new Clubhouse extensions were opened by Colonel Shelmerdine,

the Director of Civil Aviation. An article on the history of the Clubhouse recalls that in 1925 there was no Clubhouse and that all food and drinks had to be obtained from the Davenport Arms ("Mother Hooley's") at the top of the Airport Road.

In September 1925 the Club voted the large sum of £20 (which it had not got!) for a wooden hut. In 1927 the Club rented part of an old Barn on the Aerodrome and voted £160 (which it also had not got!) for structural alterations. Towards the end of 1927 the vast sum of £1200 was spent on a verandah, lavatory accommodation, a bar and a kitchen. This was made possible by the generosity of the President, Lord Wakefield, Sir William Letts and the directors of A.V.Roe & Co Ltd., and various Vice Presidents and Members of the Club, including especially John Leeming.

In 1928 thanks to the efforts of J.C.Sellars, a hard tennis court was added. This destroyed the Club garden which B.A.G.Meads had built up with such care, but with the aid of other gardening enthusiasts in the Club, he promptly set to work to build a new one.

The final extension provided a spacious lounge, billiard room, a card room, four bedrooms and bath rooms with space available for three further bed rooms if required. It was made possible largely through the generosity of Mr. J.D.Siddeley, later Lord Kenilworth (a Vice President of the Club), but many other members and friends including Mr. Aspinall, Mr. Rampling, Mr. Denerley, Mr. Monks, Mr. Hardy, Mr. Duckworth and last but by no means least Uncle James, the club's Honorary Architect. All "did their bit".

January 1932 brought the sad news of the death of Flt/Lt H.R.D. Waghorn, a popular Service Member of the Club and a Member of the Schneider Trophy Team and of the British Ski-ing Team. His death was a great loss to aviation and his portrait in oils, which was presented to the Club by Mr. C.H.Needham, still hangs in the Clubhouse (or did when I was last there).

Round about this time Club Members began to take an interest in foreign tours by aeroplane and some very interesting accounts of such tours were published, though their frankness was hardly calculated to reduce the insurance rates! At the same time an increasing number of articles about aviation during war time and pre-war days (both aeroplanes and balloons) made their appearance.

Clay Pigeon Shooting was added to the social activities, but the reports indicate that the standard of marksmanship was low!

In May 1932 Mr.D.E.Hall("Gaspipe") retired from the post of Chief Instructor owing to illhealth and was succeeded by Mr.G.F.Yuill of the Scottish Flying Club. Yuill was a great believer in the value of blind flying and succeeded in raising considerable enthusiasm among members for advanced training in this connection.

The same month saw the first defeat of Goodfellow in the senior landing contest for the Rodman Trophy, which he had won four times in succession. He was beaten by R.F.("Toffee")Hall, a popular and brilliant Club trained pilot who later

distinguished himself as an Instructor in the R.A.F.

In June came the bad news of the new subsidy agreement consequent upon the formation of National Flying Services Limited. The *Elevator* warned that the Club was going to have a difficult time to survive under the new terms.

July reported the first Isle of Man Air Race which was to become a popular annual event from then onwards. It was organised by the Club, which entered five members for the Race, R.H.Dobson, K.Twemlow, Miss W.S.Brown, R.F.Hall, and S.Hawley. The Race was won by J.R.Ashwell-Cooke of the London Club with G.Clapham of Liverpool second, and R.H.Dobson, Lancashire, third.

August 1932 gave a full report on the King's Cup Air Race, in which H.A. (Sam) Brown, the Club's second Flying Instructor, gained a prize for the fastest speed at 175.9 m.p.h. in the AVRO Mail Plane.

The same issue reported the Annual General Meeting, and it may be of interest to note the leading officers of the time, who were as follows:-

President, Lord Wakefield of Hythe,

Vice Presidents:

The Earl of Sefton, K.G., Sir K. Crossley, Bart., Sir H. Fildes, Sir John D. Siddeley,

Messrs. A.Goodfellow, S.S.Hammersley M.P., J.Lord and G.G.Parnell.

Chairman: Mr. P.T.Eckersley,

Vice Chairman; D.Nelson,

Chairman of Flying Sub-Committee; R.F.Hall,

Chairman of Finance Sub-Committee; J.C.Sellars,

Chairman of House Committee; Dr. W.Templeton,

September reported the formation of a new Aero Club at Barton, the Manchester Airport. This was under the management of Northern Air Transport Limited, the commercial concern set up by Mr. Leeming when he left the Club. The *Elevator*'s comment was restrained, but pointed out that there were now ten Flying Clubs or Schools within a radius of fifty miles from Manchester, and that it was doubtful whether there were enough members to go round.

As it turned out, this was to be the last issue of the *Elevator*. The new Committee had already decided that it was a luxury which could only be afforded on a quarterly basis at most, and the last page of the issue contained a prophetic poem of which the last verse read:-

"And so, although it seems to us
(Uncle and me) ridiculous
October and November thus
To make hiatus,
It may be that this journal is
"Unwanted", not "unwonted", bliss
And none of you will greatly miss
Your Elevators"

Before the December issue was due to appear a somewhat stormy meeting of the Committee decided, by the majority of a single vote, to discontinue the ELEVATOR.

Obituary

After the War The Lancashire Aero Club were able to re-introduce the *Elevator* and in the April 1971 issue the following notice appeared :-

We regret to record the death on March 20, of Mr. Alan Goodfellow a founder member and Vice-President of The Lancashire Aero Club and express our deep sympathy to his family. An appreciation by our President, Mr. Basil Meads M.B.E. :-

"The Lancashire Aero Club mourns the loss of yet another founder member. Alan came to the Club in 1924 after 7 years service with the Royal Flying Corps (later becoming the Royal Air Force) which he joined in 1915 as a pilot. In an article appearing in an early edition of the *Elevator* he recorded his delight on the occasion of his first solo in a 50hp Bleriot Monoplane and of his extreme satisfaction and enjoyment he felt when he went solo in the D.H.Moth G-EBLV. He had achieved the purpose for which he had joined the Club and again experienced the delights of being airborne, this time at Woodford.

In those early days it was not enough to be a good flying member (and Alan was all of that) because The Lancashire Aero Club had to struggle for its very existence. It was required of every member of goodwill that they applied themselves to the common tasks incidental to administration, development and building up the strength of the Club. So it was that Alan soon found himself on the Committee and applying himself with characteristic enthusiasm and ability to whatever task was thrown his way. One of these was the completion of the Memorandum and Articles of Association and the framing of the constitution of the Club as it exists today.

He was Chairman of the Club for the year 1929/30, having already become joint Editor of the *Elevator* in 1927. Alan's interest in gliding brought about the formation of the Gliding Section in 1930 and the purchase of a Prufling Glider from Germany. Although highlighted by the historic gliding match with the London Gliding Club at Ivinghoe, when Alan was a member of the Lancashire team, the interests of our members in gliding faded after a couple of months. The glider crashed and the wreckage was bought by a group for a song.

But that is not the end of a "non-success" story, because Alan's interest in gliding was still very much alive. He was to become one of those determined group of people who created the gliding club at Camphill and was eventually re-united with his now refurbished (and dare I say it, beloved) Prufling.

The late 30s saw the formation of the Civil Air Guard, with Alan as Area Commandant. Designed to create a pool of pilots for the R.A.F. in the event of hostilities, the scheme brought about a tremendous increase in flying and an influx of many new members. However when hostilities really began to threaten, the Civil Air Guard was abandoned and Alan together with 14 other members enrolled with the Fleet Air Arm under a scheme offered by the Royal Navy, being desperately short of air crews. At the end of the War he retired with the rank of Commander.

In 1945 he became vice-chairman of the Royal Aero Club and the Association of British Aero Clubs. By that time professional commitments required him to move to London and Alan was no longer able to take an active interest in the Lancashire Aero Club, now struggling to establish itself at Barton, after being refused permission to return to Woodford. He lent his weight to the discussions with A.V.Roe & Co. but to no avail. The creation of the Kemsley Flying Trust found Alan Goodfellow a trustee appointed to look after the interests of the flying clubs and on several occasions when the Lancashire Aero Club resorted to the facilities offered by the Trust, one suspects that he was prepared to go to the limits of his conscience.

There is much more that Alan Goodfellow did for the flying club movement in the early days, although he was known by name to only a few of the present generation of members of the oldest aeroplane club in the U.K. It is therefore fitting on his passing that we be reminded of and feel a sense of gratitude for all that he did to form the bedrock upon which the Lancashire Aero Club was built and has prospered."

Chapter 4

After The Second World War

Part One

With war clouds looming on the horizon, Neville Chamberlain at least gained the country some breathing space with the 'piece of paper' which he brought back from Munich. It was realised just how short the country was of pilots and as a result the Civil Air Guard was introduced.

It was the new Secretary of State for Air, Sir Kingsley Wood who announced the formation of the Civil Air Guard on 23rd July 1938. Members of the public aspiring to be pilots were invited to apply to 76 clubs for training. All these clubs had agreed to participate in the Government's scheme, which offered them payment for the use of their aircraft, instructors, engineers and premises. The Civil Air Guard did not own any aeroplanes or premises of its own.

The clubs were paid £30 for each pupil who qualified for a licence, with further payments for up to ten hours annual practice after qualification. As the scheme developed, so the clubs sought additional machines to provide for the extra needs of C.A.G. flying. As already mentioned, The Lancashire Aero Club participated in the scheme. As well as using Woodford for this purpose, additional facilities were set up at Barton to meet the demand.

The normal club charge at the time was about £1.10s.0d. (£1.50p) per hour. Men and Women applicants aged between 18 and 50, medically fit and free of any other military reserve commitment, were taught at a cost to them of 2/6d (12½p) per hour on weekdays and 5/- (25p) at weekends. By joining the scheme, participants undertook to offer themselves for service in a national emergency, although this might not necessarily involve flying. As already mentioned in Chapter Three, amongst those serving on the committee, set up to administer the scheme, was Maj. Alan Goodfellow RAF(Rtd).

The Civil Air Guard came in for the same level of criticism as club flying had already received, for being unlikely to be of any use to the Nation. However when The Lancashire Aero Club reintroduced the 'Elevator' in 1958 the following article appeared in the first issue. The article relates only to members of the Club but there can be little doubt that the Civil Air Guard did in fact make a useful contribution.

THE WAR EFFORT OF THE LANCASHIRE AERO CLUB

By The Club's President L.D.BIRKETT, Esq.

On several occasions since hostilities ceased in 1945, suggestions have been mooted that some record should be made of the efforts of members of the Club during the 1939/1945 War, but so far as I am aware nothing of this sort has ever reached sufficient detail for publication. I do not claim that the list with its brief particulars is either complete or accurate.

On the assumption that the list is substantially correct, I think that there is little doubt that the members of the Club can feel justifiably proud of the War efforts of its members. If other clubs have records as good as ours there is surely a potent argument for the existence of a healthy type of flying movement in this country.

A sobering thought must however occur to our older members, when they read of some eighteen of their colleagues who gave their lives on active service. I hope that some suitable recognition of the those who failed to return may be made in the Club Records.

My sincere apologies are offered to any who might be slighted by inaccuracies or omissions, but the difficulties of an amateur historian are legion.

Members Name.	Served In.	Rank.	Decoration.	Killed In Active Service.
D.L.Armitage	RAFVR	S/L	D.F.C.	
C.R.Beverley	RAFVR			
L.D.Birkett	RAFVR	S/L	A.F.C.	*
W.L.Boon	RAFVR			
K. Booth	RAFVR	F/Lt		
P.M.Brothers	RAF			
W.S.Browning	RNVR	Lt		
J.C.Byrom	RNVR	Lt/Cd(E)		
R.H.Byrom	RNVR	Lt		
J.C.Crantill	RAF			
W. Carswell	RAFVR			
A. Collinge	A.T.A.			
P.T.Eckersley	RNVR	Lt		*
A. Franklin	RAF	S/L		
P.W.Fell	RNVR	Lt/Cdr(A)		
R.T.Gething	RAF	G/C		
L. Gilbert	RNVR	Cdr(A)		
R.G.Glaze	RAFVR			*
S. Gleave	Test Pilot/AVRO			*
A. Goodfellow	RNVR	Cdr	C.B.E.	
B. Gray	M.o.I.			*
R.F.Hall	RAFVR	F/Lt		
R.W.Hall	RAFVR			*
J. Harrop	RAFVR			*
R.M.Hayes	RAF	W/Cdr		
C.O.Hinks	RAFVR			*
J. Rowlinson	A.T.A.			
M.A.Lacayo	RNVR			*
J. Leeming	RAFVR			
E.O.Liebert	RNVR	Lt		
A. Livermore	RAFVR			*

W.F.Machin	RNVR	Lt/Cdr(A)	
J.T.L.Mallard	RAFVR	F/Lt	
B.A.G.Meads	RNVR	Lt/Cdr(A) M.B.E.	
A.C.Mills	RNVR	Cdr(A)	
A. Millward	RNVR	Lt/Cdr(A) O.B.E.	
R.A.S.Moss	RAFVR		*
T.J.Mycok	RAFVR		
G.V.Oddy	RNVR	Cdr(A)	
P.A.Rippon	RAFVR	W/Cdr	D.F.C.
C.S.Robinson	RAFVR		
J.H.M.Shaw	RAFVR		*
R.H.Shaw	RAFVR		*
T.N.Stack	RNVR	Lt/Cdr(A)	*
C.J.Sullivan	RAFVR		
S.A.Thorn	Test Pilot/AVRO		*
J. Tweedale	RAFVR	F/Lt	
A.W.Vincent	A.T.A.		
A. Ward	A.T.A.		
D.L.Walsh	RAF		
R.D.G.Wight	RAFVR		*
C. Wilson	RAFVR		*
W.L.Woodward	RAFVR	W/Cdr	A.F.C.
M.L.Worthington	RAFVR		*
G.F.Yuill	RAF		

Part Two

At the outset of the War the Lancashire Aero Club made available to the Government its entire fleet of seven aircraft and its buildings. A certain amount of compensation was received later but at the end of the War the Club found itself with its members scattered far and wide.

A great future was envisaged for light aviation, enormous strides having taken place in aircraft performance. The pre-war fighters had been single engined biplanes such as the Gloster Gladiator and Hawker Hart, whereas at the end of the hostilities they were jet monoplanes capable of very high speeds.

With de-mobilisation, people began to return home back to civilian life. It was not long before previous members started to get together to see what could be salvaged from the once great Club. They wanted to reform again but serious difficulties were met when they were denied the return of the hangar and clubhouse at Woodford.

AVRO's contribution to the war effort was legendary. However when compared with the earlier halcyon days, totally new conceptions in security were now the order of the day. As a result, it was just not possible for the Aero Club to return to the same cosy co-habitation with its previous benefactor. A new home would have to be found.

All that remained was a club with a moderate bank balance and a small number of members but without aeroplanes, aerodrome or accomodation. More members would have to be recruited and funds raised in order to purchase second-hand, pre-war aircraft. A committee was formed and a great deal of hard work and patience gradually started to put the Club back on its feet.

In the years to come, the committee expected to be in a position to buy new light aircraft which would surely be forthcoming onto the market. In

fact this sadly was not fully realised, because production of light aircraft was seriously neglected in this country.

In the meantime Barton Aerodrome, which had been requisitioned by The Ministry of Aircraft Production during the hostilities, had reverted to the ownership of Manchester Corporation. Following considerable activity in aircraft production, Barton was moving into decline, being overshadowed by the expanding Ringway Airport. The Lancashire Aero Club had set up an operation at Barton before the war to meet the growing demands of The Civil Air Guard. If access was no longer possible at Woodford, would Barton meet the Club's requirements ?

Eventually by the kind co-operation of the Manchester Corporation, the Club was allowed to operate from Barton Aerodrome. Some old offices, which had now been vacated, were converted into a clubhouse and one small hangar was made available for the Club's use. Two airworthy, war-surplus Taylorcraft and a Tiger Moth were purchased, together with a dismantled Tiger Moth which was eventually reconstructed.

The Club eventually recommenced flying in 1946, however the immediate post-war period was very difficult. Members were few and flying became very expensive. This was further aggravated by the fact that there was no variety in the light aeroplanes available.

The next few years were a veritable struggle. The pre-war government subsidies were replaced by a small petrol rebate which although helpful, was not really enough to get flying clubs established on their own feet. Somehow the Club survived and slowly but slowly started to claw its way back towards its old self and re-establish its once great reputation.

But there were even more set-backs which had to be overcome. The Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve had also been using Barton during the post-war period, but in 1952, the unit disbanded. As a result, Manchester Corporation were forced into deciding to close the aerodrome.

It was the Chairman of the Club, Fred Dunkerley, who was also a well known racing pilot of that era, who came up with a scheme to save the situation. The Club did not have enough finances to be able to justify the airfield being kept open solely for its own use. However it was Dunkerley who suggested to Barton Storage Ltd (who were part of Sivewright Bacon Ltd) to take on the lease of the airfield from the City Corporation. This would allow them to make use of the large hangar space which was now available. The Chairman's idea saved the day, because this allowed the Aero Club to retain use of the grass runways and thus become the only flying occupants on the field; an ideal location for flying training.

The Club was saved from having to find a new home again and was now in a position to consolidate its standing. By the year of 1955 the number of flying hours stood at 1279.50 and six new pilots were trained; the total club membership

was 250. The Club training course was approved by the Ministry of Aviation and in this year a number of A.T.C.Cadets received flying tuition in addition to air experience flights given to other Cadets. The only help given by the Government was in the form of the petrol rebate.

The following year 1956/7, the number of flying hours increased to 1520.10 and an extra Auster was purchased. The Club also engaged extra full-time instructional staff, as the general enthusiasm for light aviation was now showing a marked upward trend.

This was shown again in the following year when the flying accomplished was 1815.15 hours. Membership was still on the increase and more members were beginning to consider buying their own aircraft. At this stage although the number of pilots again increased another set-back was about to appear. It was decided that in the future, air experience flights to A.T.C.Cadets would be taken away from civilian flying clubs and undertaken by Air Experience Squadrons, manned by R.A.F. and ex-R.A.F. pilots.

This set-back resulted in a drop in flying hours to 1613.25 in the year 1958/9. Despite this, the Club membership increased, and it was evident that the enthusiasm for light aviation was still growing.

In the following years despite all attempts to increase flying hours it became more and more apparent that the old aircraft were being taxed to their limit. Despite the fact that the Club was able to purchase another Auster the flying totals for 1959/60 only reached 1685.45. This was an increase over the previous year but the total of 1501.30 hours for 1960/61 confirmed fears that further progress could only be made with more modern aircraft.

Accordingly plans were made to replace the fleet gradually with more up to date aircraft. The only regret was that the British Aircraft Industry had not produced a replacement aircraft suitable for flying clubs to operate. Parting with Tiger Moths and Austers was quite a wrench, but the Club acquired two Piper Colt aircraft in 1961.

In 1961 the Club took over the administration of the Aerodrome and the flying side of the Club's activities was installed in the offices in the Control Tower. Up until then, all of the Club's administration had taken place in the clubhouse. The Club C.F.I. became Aerodrome Manager, a post previously still held by a Manchester Corporation employee, and the staff also became responsible for Air Traffic Control and re-fueling duties. With the exception of one year, 1962/63, when the Club was in the process of building a new clubhouse to replace the old one, which was unfortunately burnt down, the number of flying hours increased each year. In 1965/66 a record number of 2575.15 were flown.

The number of pilots trained per year rose to over 40 and the Club was still training A.T.C.Cadets. Their number had grown over the last decade so that 16-20 Cadets were being trained

each year. The membership was still increasing and then stood at over 350. In fact the number of new members had risen so much in the last two years, that a waiting list had to be started before members could be taught to fly. The number of members who now owned their own aircraft had also risen over the last ten years from a mere 4 to 25. Proof indeed that light aviation was more popular than ever.

Despite the fact that the government had withdrawn the petrol subsidy in 1964, the Club was now more financially sound and making provisions to foresee the needs of the future by establishing an aircraft replacement fund. The fleet then consisted of four Piper Colts and one Cessna 172. In the last ten years up to 1966, a total of 282 pilots had completed their flying training at Lancashire Aero Club and obtained Private Pilot's Licences.

Going back to 1955; a current member David Ash recalls that the C.F.I. was Hubert Granville 'Taffy' Davies, an ex Lancaster Pilot who was trained in the U.S.A. on Boeing Stearmans under the wartime scheme, where a lot of basic training was conducted overseas. He was immediately selected as an instructor himself due to above average ability, but later went on to Bomber Command to fly Lancasters on operations.

During his spell at Lancashire Aero Club, 'Taffy' flew club member Fred Dunkerley's Miles Gemini G-AKKB in air races coming second in the King's Cup at Coventry in 1959. He also flew (and it is believed raced) Dunkerley's Miles Sparrowjet G-ADNL. This was a converted Miles Sparrowhawk fitted with two 330lb thrust Turbomeca jet engines in place of the original single piston engine, giving a speed in excess of 250m.p.h. This aircraft was the only pure jet ever to have operated from Barton.

Taffy's immediate predecessors as Lancashire Aero Club C.F.I.'s were Mrs. Gabrielle Patterson and Tommy Thompson. Mrs Patterson was a well known ferry pilot with the Air Transport Auxiliary.

The aircraft operated at that time were Auster Autocrats G-AJIIH and G-AJIW plus Tiger Moth G-ANEE. A further Auster G-AGVL was purchased from Sandown Aero Club and another Tiger Moth was rebuilt from spares.

Private owners were few at that time but Barton housed Frank Fletcher's Miles Messenger G-ALBE, 'Sil' Anderton's Auster Aiglet G-AMZI and a Percival Proctor belonging to Burnley Aircraft Products, G-AKZG. Also of course, the previously mentioned racing aircraft of Fred Dunkerley - the Gemini being painted in the Club livery of the time, dark blue and silver with red cheat lines and the Lancashire Red Rose on the tail.

In 1956, Taffy Davies was joined by Mr.(ex Squadron Leader)A.A.Rollo universally known as 'Charlie'. Charlie Rollo was an immensely experienced pilot having joined the R.A.F. as a boy apprentice in 1931 at Halton. On transferring to aircrew he went on to fly Westland Wapitis on the North West Frontier of India and during the war

served mainly on Mosquitos. After the war he went back to India as an instructor working for the Indian Government. On his return to the U.K. he came to the Lancashire Aero Club with something like 10,000 hours in his logbook.

Charlie stood in as C.F.I. on several occasions during his long service with the Club but preferred flying to administration and politics. He retired in 1981 but sadly died shortly afterwards. An extension to the Clubhouse had been built in 1979 and the room was subsequently named 'The Rollo Room' in memory of this very popular man.

By the early sixties Taffy had left and the club fleet was upgrading with new American imports following the lifting of import restrictions. Piper Colts G-ARNC and G-ARND appeared in 1961 and Tri-Pacer G-ARHU was also at Barton about that time and possibly on the fleet.

Another member John Teece, remembers his first solo in the 'fifties, his aircraft being Tiger Moth G-ANEE, which was affectionately known to the members as 'Annie'. Lessons at that time cost around £4.0.0d per hour. He has particular fond memories of Fred Dunkerley who sponsored his membership application before the the committee.

John's further memories of Dunkerley's racing stable recall that the Sparrowjet was the only one of its type in the World. The Sparrowhawk was the original prototype built in 1935 from standard Hawk components but incorporating many racing modifications. In 1950, the machine returned to Redhill where it was reconfigured into a jet aircraft, the work was finally completed at Shoreham. This involved an entirely new front fuselage and tail together with modified wing roots to incorporate two Turbomeca Palas Gas turbines. The resultant M.77 Sparrowjet first flew on December 14th 1953

Dunkerley, who was a mill owner in Lancashire, brought the machine to Barton where he also kept his Mew Gull G-AEXF and his famous cut-down Gemini. His reputation as one of the original 'Throttle Benders' did much to draw in the crowds at racing events and also ensured that the name of the Lancashire Aero Club remained at the forefront in light aviation. His achievements had already been recognised by The Royal Aero Club when he was awarded the Bronze Medal in 1950 'for outstanding air-racing performances'. However at the King's Cup Air Race held at Baginton/Coventry Airfield in 1959, John recalls that only one jet engine could be made to start and the aircraft had to be scratched from the Race, much to Fred's annoyance.

But going back to the Gemini, Dunkerley succeeded in establishing a number of major record flights between London and various European capitals in the early 'fifties. G-AKKB was built at Woodley and first registered on the 28th October 1947 and flown three days later having been awarded its certificate of airworthiness on the same day. Delivered to Fred Dunkerley, it was based at Barton and flown in the 1949 Kings Cup Air Races. Modified with a cut-down fuselage for racing, it

was first flown in this configuration on 6th June 1951. In 1953 Dunkerley established a new FAL Class C1 intercapital record in 'KKB and went on to race it in the 1953 and 1958 Kings Cup Air Races.

There was no greater thrill from the spectator's point of view than seeing an aircraft being demonstrated at low height and Fred Dunkerley was a master of this. Again John remembers one Sunday afternoon in brilliant summer weather, when Fred said he would put his Gemini through its paces. "We had all heard of the Americans flying their racing aircraft round pylons. On this occasion it was the Barton Control Tower ! Fred brought the Gemini past the gathered spectators at an angle of almost 180 degrees. We could see right into the cockpit, his white shirt reflecting right through the canopy. He treated us to three runs, the beads of sweat on his forehead indicated how much concentration had gone into that demonstration." Fred last flew the aeroplane on 16th August 1962.

A different point of interest regarding the flying activities of the Club at that time happened in relation to the U.S.A.F. airbase at Burtonwood. Further recollections from John:- "The commanding officer was becoming increasingly concerned with the Club's aircraft coming into close proximity with the military aircraft as they began their approach to land at Burtonwood passing directly overhead Barton.

To prove his point, the C.O. invited Club members to attend the base. He then put up a twin engined C47 (military version of the DC3) into the flight pattern so that the members could go inside the airfield's mobile A.T.C. unit for an explanation of what was happening. With only room for a few members at a time, the demonstration lasted all afternoon, keeping the poor pilot very busy flying in circles for some considerable time. Nevertheless the exercise served its purpose by helping to emphasise the importance of avoiding close encounters between the Club and these much larger military aircraft."

Slowly the prosperity of the Club continued to improve, but having lost its clubhouse in a disastrous fire, a new building had to be constructed. An appeal fund was set up to raise the necessary money, in the meantime the only accommodation were the offices and briefing room in the control tower. Eventually the appeal realised £6000 and work began on a new purpose built clubhouse. Further funds had to be realised through loans etc. Rather than rebuild on the same site it was decided to re-position to the other side of the main access road which gave a better outlook onto the airfield. (At this point it is sad to note that almost all the Club's archives and records were lost in the inferno making the historian's job a much harder task.)

In the meantime, the number of members acquiring their own aeroplanes was increasing and the demand for hangar space was beginning to put a strain on the Club's only hangar. As was the custom at many airfields around the country,

economics demanded that most of the wartime hangars were put to commercial use. This left the flying fraternity having to seek accommodation for their aeroplanes elsewhere and the story at Barton was just the same.

When the small Club hangar could hold no more the private owners had to resort to picketing their machines in the open air. In an attempt to gain some protection from the elements, some owners resorted to pushing their aircraft as far back as possible into the alcoves at the base of the Control Tower, which at least afforded some form of haven. In the early Seventies two such regular inhabitants to be found in these alcoves were Taylorcraft Auster G-ATAX and Whitman Tailwind G-BCBR. Meanwhile sheltering in the hangar for quite a few years to come could be found the old Nord Noralpha G-ATHH.

In 1977 the situation was improved for a short period when a blister hangar was erected on the site of the old clubhouse under the guidance of John Lucketti, a member of the club.

But it was not long before the demand for more hangar space re-emerged.

In 1979 the situation was improved for a further period when a second blister hangar was erected adjacent to the Control Tower. This was built by Mike Howells and it is interesting to note that the cladding used to cover the construction came from the old stands which were being demolished by Bolton Wanderers Football Club.

This space was also filled very quickly and still the demand continued.

In 1981 the situation was further improved for a short period when an extension was built onto the third hangar.

But again it was not long before the demand for more hangar space re-emerged.

In 1984 the large historical hangar near the control tower (which for many years was known as the Pemberton Hangar) was vacated when the industrial occupants were declared bankrupt. Hopes were raised that the Club would be able to take over the lease but stipulations by the local council that massive repairs would have to be undertaken to make the construction safe were beyond the Club's finances.

The hangar stood empty for several years while negotiations continued. At one stage it looked as if the council were going to have the building demolished but the situation was saved at the last minute.

While all this was going on the Club were experiencing yet another financial downturn. The membership figures were still very good with a steady influx of new students however the Flying School operation was becoming a financial liability. In the end it became necessary to negotiate a rescue package with Mike Howell's company Telair whereby the Flying School would be operated on behalf of the Club under a Franchise. At the same time Telair negotiated their

own lease for the large hangar and work started on the refurbishment and rescue of the well known landmark.

So The Lancashire Aero Club had survived yet another hurdle and even more hangar space was filled in no time at all. Perhaps an examination of the possible reasons for this rapid expansion in the number of residents might be worthwhile at this stage.

Location.

Other flying schools and clubs in the North West were based at larger airfields offering longer tarmac runways and other facilities such as radar and night flying. However some of these facilities can in fact result in a restriction on recreational flying. For example with the increase in airline traffic at Ringway/Manchester it was no longer possible to contemplate going up for just a couple of circuits and practice landings. Special VFR clearances became necessary and considerable delays could be expected as larger commercial aircraft took precedence. Furthermore the operation of non-radio aircraft was totally out of the question.

In retrospect, if the Club had been granted access to Woodford after the War, it is likely that the closer proximity to Ringway might in fact have proved to be a disadvantage. Barton was now proving to be an ideal location for Club flying, both for students and PPL's.

Club Fleet.

The Club's fleet was modernised in the Sixties and the Piper Colts and Tri-Pacers proved to be very popular both with students and PPL's. When it was thought that the time had come for another update, the Committee found that Piper had moved on from a preference for high wing to a low wing model, in the shape of the Piper PA-28 Cherokee.

The high wing configuration had proved most favourable on the short grass runways and it was decided to convert this time onto the emerging Cessna 150 which was beginning to appear in this country. These proved to be remarkable, robust little aeroplanes with a very good short field performance which was essential at Barton. With yet another modern fleet the Club's prestige was thus maintained.

Airshows.

It was John Leeming and his fellow founder members who first realised that air displays could be used not only to provide entertainment but also to increase public awareness and attract possible future trainee pilots. The size of Barton and its grass runways placed some restriction on the size of event that could be organised. Nevertheless *The Manchester Airshow* as it was now known was organised by the Club's own members, possibly with a greater enthusiasm than other airshows in

the locality. The popularity of the event was growing amongst the displaying fraternity, which ensured that a surprising array of star acts appeared at the show.

Among the growing number of trade stands, the Lancashire Aero Club always positioned its own exhibition as the focal point which invariably attracted large numbers of bookings for trial lessons. A considerable number of members can still trace their origins with the Club back to their visit to the Club's stand on Airshow Days.

We will take a further indepth look at Airshows later.

The Popular Flying Association

The PFA is a national organisation whose main objective is to further the ambitions of light aviation and in particular to foster encouragement for home-built aircraft. An international rally is held each year, the venues so far, having originated at Sywell, have also been located at Leicester, Cranfield and latterly Wroughton.

Local branches or 'Struts' are encouraged and in 1971 the first tentative steps were taken to form the North Western Strut. Ernie Horsfall, a well known Jodel enthusiast, started the ball rolling from his home in Preston and Messrs Blain, Bull, Harper, Jackson, Taylor and Winstanley are thought to have been the first to attend a meeting at Ernie's house.

Eventually a more permanent location had to be found and the Lancashire Aero Club were approached in 1973 to hold meetings on the Club's premises. Apart from a couple of occasions, when differences in the level of charges caused the Strut to try different locations, Barton has been the regular venue since then, with meetings held in the Clubhouse on the last Thursday in the Month.

The Strut also organised its own 'Fly-Ins' which over the years have attracted large numbers of visiting aircraft which helped to maintain Barton as the focal point for light aviation in the North West.

Inevitably with the common interests of the Lancashire Aero Club and the North Western Strut, both have benefited from members who have joined first one and then the other organisations. In particular Cliff Mort must be mentioned since he has worn the Chairman's hat of both Committees over several years.

We will take a further indepth look at the North Western Fly-Ins later.

The reasons for the expansion of the Lancashire Aero Club were many but this did not make life any easier, either for the staff or the committee. In fact much the opposite. However I do not wish to dwell too long on the duties of either the staff or the thankless task of being a committee member for fear of discouraging any prospective newcomers. Suffice it to say that

somehow the Staff, Committee and Members have always managed to overcome each obstacle and the Club has still continued to survive through its chequered and sometimes strife-torn history.

There is a distinct possibility however, that the Lancashire Aero Club would not have survived for many of the post-war years had it not been for the financial assistance received from the Kemsley Flying Trust. The following notes were supplied by Roger Wareing.

The Kemsley Flying Trust was founded in 1947 with a capital of £100,000, and its object was to aid the development of light aircraft and gliding clubs. During its period of operation the Trust assisted private and sport flying to the sum of nearly £200,000 by using the original capital sum plus the interest from loan repayments. During its time the Trust made loans to Clubs for capital development, and helped to finance construction programmes for ultra-light aeroplanes, high performance gliders and light weight helicopters. In addition financial guarantees were given enabling various air races and aviation events to take place.

In 1960 Lord Kemsley and his family sold their interests in the Kemsley Press signalling the end of the Kemsley Flying Trust but existing contracts were honoured to their conclusion. Throughout the entire time of its operation the Trust's meetings were held at the premises of the Royal Aero Club and Secretary, Basil G. Meads, was able to claim an almost one hundred per cent attendance record. Alan Goodfellow also served on the Trust's Committee as a trustee. Not surprisingly Lancashire Aero Club sought help from the Trust on several occasions. Their first application was submitted in November 1947 for a loan of £800 towards the £1400 required for the purchase of an Auster Autocrat aircraft. The application was granted on the terms that the loan would be repaid over a period of five years at a rate of interest of 1%.

One year later the Club found the nature of the ground at Barton and their uncertain relationship with Manchester Corporation unsatisfactory and therefore a loan was sought to enable land to be purchased for the building of their own airfield. Members of the Trust thought that the scheme was too much of a speculative gamble and referred the proposal back for further financial details.

At the following meeting it was learned that the Club hoped to improve their relationship with their landlords with a view to remaining at Barton, and to build a clubhouse for its members. The Trust indicated they would be willing to make a loan for this purpose. The new clubhouse was duly built in 1950 at a cost of £1400 of which £750 had been raised from the Kemsley Flying Trust who required repayment over a ten year period without interest charges.

At the meeting of the Trust in January 1953 much time was diverted to discussing the affairs of Lancashire Aero Club. Whilst the Club had continued to repay the loans to the Trust it had allowed other debts to accumulate. It was felt that

the Club Committee had not appreciated the deteriorating financial position and accountants had been called in to review the situation. Whilst the Club could not increase its revenue from the contract with the Air Ministry for the training of A.T.C. cadets, it was expected that membership subscriptions, aircraft hire and training charges should be increased to a more realistic figure, reflecting the true cost of running the Club. If these conditions were fulfilled the Trust would be willing to advance a loan of £1250 to enable the Club to pay off its sundry debts. It was decided that the Club's two Tiger Moths would be accepted as security.

During the following six months the affairs of Lancashire Aero Club continued to occupy much of the time at Trust meetings. In February Manchester Corporation announced their intention to close Barton Aerodrome and to use the land for redevelopment. As a consequence of this the Air Ministry cancelled their contract for the training of air cadets. It was felt that the growing financial problems were in the main attributable to mismanagement by the Committee. The Trust as a result requested an up to date valuation of the Club's aircraft as security against their loans, and that a new committee of management be appointed.

The newly appointed committee resisted temptations for large increases in subscriptions and flying costs as it was felt that this would be counter productive inasmuch that it would drive members away from Barton. Instead it was decided to concentrate on efficient management and securing the continuation of flying at Barton. At the meeting of the Kemsley Flying Trust on the 14th July 1953 it was reported that Manchester Corporation had reconsidered their position and had granted a lease for the airfield to continue for seven years, so securing the Club's tenancy. The good news was to continue. On the 12th October 1954 the new committee reported to the Trust that all sundry debts had been paid off, that loan repayments to be paid to the Trust could be met, and the Club now had a trading surplus of £547 on the previous twelve months activities. Lord Kemsley wrote a letter of congratulations to Lancashire Aero Club on their excellent recovery.

Five years were to elapse before another approach was made to the Trust. By this time the Club employed two instructors and operated two Tiger Moths and three Auster Autocrats, also offering members an extended clubhouse for social events. The Club had made a remarkable recovery from its previous financial problems and was now regarded as one of the most progressive flying clubs in the country. The Trust had no hesitation in authorising a loan of £750 enabling a purchase to be made of another Autocrat for £900. The loan would be repaid over five years at 2½%. A month after this meeting, in June 1958, the Club again approached the Trust for a short term loan of £500 for a period of six months. The money was needed to buy a further Tiger Moth at £250 and to meet heavy maintainance expenditure. The loan was granted at 2½% and would be paid off when

membership subscriptions were received. Meanwhile Club aircraft would be offered as security.

The last time Lancashire Aero Club approached the Kemsley Flying Trust was in April 1959 when a bridging loan was required. This was to enable the purchase of a further Autocrat for £1200 which was to replace two Tiger Moths which the Club currently had up for sale. The request was for a sum of £800, at 2½% interest, to be repaid upon the sale of the Tiger Moths. The Trust had no hesitation in granting the loan for the financial position of the Club was sound, with a bank balance of £560, and in the opinion of the Trust the Club was being expertly managed with good prospects for further development.

Lancashire Aero Club were not the only people at Barton Aerodrome to seek financial aid from the Kemsley Flying Trust. At their meeting in March 1957 consideration was given to a request from the Barton Flying Group, of the P.F.A. for a loan of £320 towards the purchase price of £400 for a Tipsy B. This request was granted subject to the Trust's usual conditions. In November of the same year the Trust received a further request from the Barton Flying Group, this was for the sum of £155 to enable the Tipsy to be upgraded up to MK. 4 specification. The work involved enclosing the cockpit and sundry small modifications to the airframe, the whole work to be carried out by the Yorkshire Aeroplane Club. The Trust felt that the price of £155 was excessive for the work involved and offered £100 to be added to the loan which had been advanced a few months previously.

The Control Tower

Whilst this part of the book is concerned primarily with the Aero Club, Roger Wareing also supplied some interesting material about the Control Tower, hence its appearance on these pages (along with some additional material supplied by Tom Dugdale) :-

It has been claimed by some that the Control Tower at Barton Aerodrome is the oldest surviving control tower in the world. Such a sweeping statement might be difficult to sustain. It might be more accurate to say that it is believed to be the oldest civilian control tower in this country and certainly the only one to have been in continuous use for over sixty years without being subjected to any major structural alterations.

The plans were drawn by Manchester City Architect, G.Noel Hill F.R.I.B.A. who described the building as Manchester Airport Control Tower and Meteorological Office. Subsequent reports in the press stated that, "Barton Airport has a particular significance in the history of civil aviation in this country. It was the first in this country to be built on what are now the accepted principles of airport design. It marked an advance towards the modern highly sophisticated techniques of aircraft control. Hitherto flying was centred on open fields where aircraft took off and landed wherever there was enough space."

In 1930 just after the airport opened it was reported that, "It is at present the only airport in the country constructed on the American principle with runways or tracks on which the aircraft can land and take off, much as a train draws up or leaves a station. Control of all the aircraft in the vicinity or on the ground is maintained from the modern purpose-built control tower."

Photographs taken in 1931 and throughout the ensuing years show that the silhouette of the building has remained the same. The only change to the exterior appearance has been the removal of the large lateral aerials fitted to the rooftop. The four arms at the base of the tower were set to the magnetic compass points North, South, East and West of the day when the variation was fifteen degrees west. The control tower is now a Grade 2 listed building which means it is subjected to numerous building regulations preventing modification to its external appearance.

No such restrictions apply to alterations inside the building and over the years various rooms have been subjected to change of use sometimes necessitating the removal or construction of partition walls. The one feature of the building remaining unchanged during all these years is the toilets !

The most recent change took place in 1991 when the ground floor was upgraded to meet the needs of the flying school, now being unrecognisable from its format of only a few years ago. Entry through the door into what is now the flying school reception area used to give access to the staff rest room and where the reception desk is now situated used to be a screen wall. The office behind used to be the fire station and garage for the fire engine, viewed from the outside, traces of the double doors are still visible.

The smaller door to the right of the reception area opened into the teleprinter room, which was completely dark. Blackboards adorned the walls with messages such as "Air Traffic" to Amsterdam, Paris etc. The other projection from the base of the tower, now used for field maintenance equipment, was originally designated as a spare garage and meteorological equipment store.

Going up the first flight of stairs to the observation balcony one arrives at what is today the Lancashire Aero Club office. This used to house the general meteorological service and another smaller room provided accommodation for the meteorological officer.

Entry to the second floor opened into a short corridor off which could be found the "Overseers" office and the Control office. Also to be found were a store room and a battery room respectively. Finally within the glass windows of the top floor was a separate square cubicle containing direction finding equipment sited next to the entry door. On the far side of the cubicle was a screened off radio operators room with the remainder open plan to permit clear views across the airfield.

The telephones to all airfield offices were centralised in the Met' Office Section on the first

floor. A small exchange was fitted complete with "Dolls Eyes" and air pressure message tubes went up to the "Glass House" at the top.

Regular users of the airfield may not be aware of the interest which the Control Tower generates. In recent years visitors have come to Barton for the sole purpose of viewing the tower. These have included representatives from English Heritage, students of architecture and industrial archaeologists. Such interest is not confined to the U.K. but includes countries such as U.S.A., India and Poland. Barton Aerodrome is certainly home to one of the unique features from aviation's history.

To summarise the Sixties, Seventies and Eighties era, the following is an extract of an article written for the *Elevator* by Tom Dugdale.

The 1960's - The Colt Years

The winter weather during my early years at Barton was usually horrid. Before the Clean Air Act the soot in the air deposited large blobs on your car and gave a yellowish green colour to the fogs which became known as Smogs. Flying during December was restricted to three weeks, because the Club closed from Christmas Eve till January. All the flying staff had to take this week off, and hopefully manage to get another week in during the summer, if they were lucky. We had one day off a week and one weekend in four, working from 9.00a.m. to sunset in summer and 5.00pm in winter. They were long days.

Charlie Rollo was the C.F.I. when I joined the Club. He had been there in Taffy Davies' time, since 1956. Jean Vassie was the Secretary/Treasurer, Jimmy Simpson was the Chairman, George Kattan and Bill Scraggs were Committee members. Jack Parncutt, the groundsman looked after the "Crash Lorry" and lived in the house on the airfield. The field was sublet through Sivewright-Bacon and Mr Bacon, when he visited the airfield, would usually be riding a white horse and have a gallop across the airfield. Bud Robertshaw, an American, was the instructor when I started and Messrs Hakeem, Crowe, Kay, Lepp, Preston, Hargreaves, Alvin, Lewis, Cantor and Walker my first ten students. We had three Austers painted in the Club colours of dark blue with a red flash down the fuselage and silver tailplanes, they were G-AJIH, G-AJRC, G-AGVL. The two brown and cream Piper Colts G-ARNC and G-ARND completed the fleet with Piper Tripacer G-ARHU and later G-ARFD.

My first flight at Barton was with Bud Robertshaw in an Aircoupe G-ARHC on a radio test flight, that was on 4th January 1962. On 29th April 1962 we had a landing competition which was, as usual, judged by Basil Meads and Dennis Armitage. Marker flags were placed every fifty yards down the landing run and braking was a disqualification mark. Flying in G-AGVL I was very pleased to be

able to talk my pupil Mr Hakeem to a winning performance.

R.W.Smith, Raymond Wright (who later joined the U.S.A.F.), John Devine, Bill Elrington a gliding instructor, Dave Pearson and Dave Crabtree came that summer, when we had our first batch of A.T.C. Cadets to put through a 30 hour course in three weeks. Flying charges were £5-12-6d per hour dual and the Government paid more for the cadets, so it was a good contract. Cross Countries were to Stretton and Tarleton, Poulton and Calverley. Wolverhampton and Derby was the Qualifying run.

John Smith had a Jodel (G-ARRD) at that time and we took it to RAF Odiham for our Farnborough Air Show visit on 4th September 1962. On 28th February 1963 I took Charlie down to Eastleigh to pick up a Colt G-ARNL. There was a strong southerly wind that day, as it took 2-50 hrs to get there but only 1-20hrs to get back. Charlie had engine trouble while we were flying back in formation and had to make a precautionary landing at Pershaw.

In April we acquired our first Cessna 172, G-ARIU and also picked up G-ARKT from Liverpool. In the summer of 1963, Steve Stevens composed a write up for inclusion in the Club Brochure, on his trip to Morocco with a PPL that had its ink hardly dry.

On Trafalgar Day I started off the first exercises with Bill Pickersgill in old "Katie" ('KT) and in December with Mr Dutton in Colt 'ND. He went on to acquire his own Beagle Terrier G-ASDK in the Spring of 1966. Some others to start in 1963 were Messrs Jeeves, Seville, Wienholt and Ramshaw; also Paddy McCabe who later became an instructor with the Club in the 1970's.

The Flying Year started in June in those days. At the end of May 1964 the previous record was broken by just 15 minutes at 2,051-10hrs. By the 1980's the hours had trebled.

That same summer I sent Isobel Simpson, the daughter of a past Chairman, on her first solo. Brian Newton then came on the scene, later to be the son-in-law to Dr John Ferguson who used to do the medicals. Another Cessna 172 G-AROB, came in the summer of '64, also Colt G-ARJE from Liverpool. The Qualifying cross country by then was via overhead Wolverhampton to Halfpenny Green, a long thin triangle from Warrington.

The Air Show that year was the usual little family fun event with a few local visitors from Leeds, Blackpool and Liverpool. An amenable occasion for me, acting as Colonel Bigshot shooting balloons from a yellow Tiger Moth piloted by Charlie. We swooped round several times with me losing my bush hat then goggles and finally a red with white polka dot scarf which was actually a long length of curtain material. On the final glide past the crowd we both saluted, at which point the Moth touched down. With a roar Charlie opened up and we jinked around the wind sock near the end of runway 21.

John Cartwright used to run the Clubhouse in

61-62, a green painted wooden hen house type building near number 2 hangar on the A57 side of the roadway A brick building opposite, had an emergency water supply fenced around near where number 3 hangar stands today

The winter of 1962-63 was very severe with endless freeze ups and blasts of cold air from Russia. The roads were like glass and the water supply to the Clubhouse froze time and time again. Thawing out was accomplished by using a blowlamp and sadly this must have been the reason for the devastating fire. Some charred timbers near the pipe must have been fanned by the wind late at night sufficiently to start the fire. Only a small part of the Clubhouse escaped total burning but it was only good for demolition. The new and present Clubhouse was built by the summer of 1964 at what we thought was a shockingly final cost of £15,000.

The 1970's - The early Cessna Years

In June 1968 we got our first square tailed Cessna 150, G-ASYL (which became known as the Yellow Peril) for demonstrating and practicing stalling and spinning. The Colt was not very good at demonstrating such a manoeuvre and the C.A.A. required us to get a machine which was. One disadvantage of the early Mark Cessna was the tendency of banging the tail onto the ground on landing.

It was in July 1970 that the Club acquired its fleet of Cessna 150s. The orange, black and white chequered tail easily identified the Aerobat G-AXVC which was built at the Rheims factory in France. G-AWPU was also built in France in 1969 and is still used for training at Barton to this day. We used them, initially to train the A.T.C. Cadets before converting the Club members from the flapless Colts to the Cessnas in the August. Two further french built 150s G-AXWE and G-AYGC then joined the fleet and although 'WE sadly met its demise, 'GC still lives at Barton under the ownership of a group who keep her in immaculate condition.

I see from my Log Book that for the Airshow on the 15th August 1976, I had Alf Young as my very successful flour bomber in G-AXWE. We got one bag smack on target onto the roof of the jinking fire truck, which travelled down the runway at a rate of knots much less than our own. That was when we had "little" airshows using Runway 33 as it was then.

In 1975 we acquired a second Aerobat 150, G-BCVG and in July 1978 our first Cessna 152 G-BFRL arrived. The 152 had a slightly more powerful Lycoming engine from 108hp up to 115hp and in due course further 152s arrived in the shape of G-BGJA, G-BHCX, G-BHRB and G-BHUP. The Flagship of the fleet became the Cessna 152 Aerobat with its own personalised, out of sequence registration G-BLAC (LAC = Lancashire Aero Club).

The 1980s

In 1981 the Club fleet saw the welcome return of a taildragger for the first time in many years in the form of Bellanca Citabria, G-BGGA. (Note Citabria = Airbatic backwards) My first flight was with Paul Connatty.

In August 1983 we got a Slingsby T67A G-BJNG as a trial aircraft and in October of that year we took delivery of our own T67As G-BJXB and G-BJZN. However it was 1984 before I flew 'ZN for the first time

At the end of that year my instructing came to an untimely and abrupt end due to a diagnosis of heart trouble. With the sad news that Basil Meads had passed away, I was extremely proud to be invited by the Club to accept the position of Club President.

OBITUARY

The following obituary appeared in the September 1989 issue of the *Elevator*.

It is with sad regret that I have to announce the death of Basil Meads M.B.E. on Thursday 24th August 1989.

From the early twenties he was active in all branches of Light Aviation and joined the Lancashire Aero Club in 1923 and learned to fly at Woodford. He was also interested in gliding and joined the British Gliding Association in 1929. He played a leading part in the running of the Lancashire Aero Club and of the Manchester Branch of the Royal Aeronautical Society where he became Chairman of the Gliding Section. In 1935 he helped to form the Derbyshire and Lancashire Gliding Club at Great Hucklow and was their President for many years.

During the war he joined the Fleet Air Arm and was a flying instructor in the Caribbean for three years. He finished his military service as Lt. Commander with a military M.B.E.

After the war he helped re-activate the Lancashire Aero Club, but being under Air Ministry control, private flying was no longer allowed at Woodford. He was heavily involved in the Club's move to Barton and became Chairman in 1946.

In private life he was employed by the *Evening Chronicle* where he administered the "Kemsley Trust", which involved travelling all over the country. When the *Evening Chronicle* ceased publication, Basil retired. At about this time he became President of The Lancashire Aero Club, which he always insisted was one of the proudest moments of his life.

Over the years he attended most Club functions, both flying and social, and he could often be seen judging the landing competitions. In

fact he won the Pemberton Trophy in 1930. Over the last three years, due to failing health, he could not take such an active role in the Club, but on my visits to see him he still took a very keen interest in all Club matters and its future. He will be sadly missed both for his advice on, and his knowledge of Light Aviation.

Part Three

"Didn't we have a wonderful time, the day we went to Bangor."

(with apologies to the songwriter)

Having qualified for their Private Pilot's Licence, the ambitions of the would-be aviators in the 1980's were not always easily met. Having spent a considerable amount of money in gaining their 'ticket' not all pilots were sufficiently well-off to be able to buy their own aircraft or even afford a share in a group. The only alternative was to hire a club aircraft, which due to an increasing demand in those days, very often involved having to book a 'slot' well in advance.

This usually meant hiring the aircraft for one or if lucky, two slots which at the most, allowed time for a local flight or possibly a trip to say Blackpool. Having got as far as another airfield there might be time for a quick coffee before having to dash back to Barton for the next booking. The demand was so great for the number of aircraft available, that it was not possible to book an aeroplane for a full day. Any ideas of leaving it on the tarmac of another airfield while the occupants went off to enjoy themselves somewhere else were totally out of the question. Ambitions of flying off in a Club aircraft for a picnic on a nice summer's day were just not possible. After all, if the machine was not in the air it was not earning its keep.

In 1982 Edward Pape, who was the acting Chief Flying Instructor at that time, came up with an idea which offered the PPL's a chance to fly off to another airfield for a bit of "fun in the sun". The Flying Club at Mona in Anglesey, North Wales, had announced that they were holding a 'Fly-In' at their airfield and Edward suggested that the Lancashire Aero Club should designate the event as a 'Fly-Out'.

The whole fleet of Club aircraft was made available for hire on a first come, first served basis and it was only a short time before the list had been filled. Members who owned their own aircraft were also encouraged to attend and fill any spare seats with members who had not been fortunate to reserve a Club machine.

On the Sunday morning (20th June 1982) the day dawned fine and a squadron of aeroplanes set course for the North Wales coast under the watchful eye of Edward, who had borrowed the use of a member's Cessna 172. 'Tyro' pilots were encouraged to stick close to the more experienced pilots, although the navigation necessary to find Anglesey did not present too many difficulties.

Having landed at Mona the whole entourage were free to stretch their legs, wander round the other visiting aircraft, inspect the goods on several sales stands or partake of a little refreshment in the clubhouse.

But now here comes the clever part of Edward's idea; the whole party then returned to their aeroplanes and took to the skies again. This time the 'squadron' flew the short journey back across the Menai Straights to the delightful Caernarfon Airfield. Having completed this epic trip it was only a short walk from the airfield down to the beach where the frolicking and revelry could really begin.

Picnics were set out on the beach; beach games were played and the more adventurous took a dip in the briny (including several females who went in not entirely of their own free will) while the more reserved members settled back for a spot of sunbathing. A glorious afternoon was enjoyed by all before the intrepid aviators returned to their aeroplanes for the flight back to Barton. The good thing about flying is that when the fun is over there is still another flight to look forward to.

It was a wonderful day, made even more memorable when, back at Barton the Chairman Brian Harbit announced in the clubhouse that the vacant position of CFI had been offered to Edward Pape. A very popular decision was celebrated by all but especially by those who had been on the trip.

It was generally agreed that the 'Fly-Out' was a very good idea. PPL's who had to rely on hiring the Club aircraft had been given an opportunity to enter a couple of airfields in their logbook without having to keep their eye on the time and dash back to Barton. Furthermore the Club's bank account did not suffer too much because each aeroplane on the fleet had spent almost three hours in the air.

The following year a different venue was given the 'Fly-Out' thumbs up, this time with a slight variation. The Sheffield Aero Club had announced a Fly-In and evening Bar-b-Que offering overnight accomodation for those attending and it was decided that a Lancashire Aero Club attendance would add a little quality to the event.

By making an overnight stop, it meant that the aircraft would not be required until the evening and could be utilised throughout the day before being taken over by the departing party. To add a little spice to the ensuing journey a navigation exercise was set involving heading south down the low level route, routing east from Crewe and finally turning north when overhead Hucknall. Several locations had to be identified along the route and a prize was also offered for the most accurate E.T.A./A.T.A. This time the party was to be shepherded under the guidance of AFI Roy Byway.

Several moments spring to mind, but in particular after the Bar-b-Que, the host Club's lady-CFI giving a rendition of The Air Navigation Order to the tune of the 23rd Psalm, will always stick in many people's memory ! Perhaps the minuscule

tents, which had been provided by the local ATC Cadets, did not provide the level of comfort that would have been prefered. Despite their tendency to collapse, one of the Lancashire members will always be remembered for managing to change into his carefully packed pyjamas within the confines of his shared Khaki-Canvas. Another member's wife gave up the 'comfort' of her tent and spent the night curled up inside a sleeping bag in the back of a Cessna 150 !

But the 'piece de resistance' must surely go to the Roy Byway, who somehow managed to loose his underpants, which were never to be seen again. Well not until the Wings Presentation Dance later in the year, when they mysteriously re-appeared and were presented back to him by a rather bemused guest speaker.

Sunday morning dawned and a rather bedraggled Lancashire party gathered in the clubhouse for a traditional breakfast. With all the necessary flight planning completed the aviators set course for the return journey, again under the supposed eye of Roy Byway.

Not wishing to embarrass those involved, it might be prudent just to say that a couple of the navigators became 'a little unsure of their position' much to the consternation of the Manchester Air Traffic Controllers. Following up behind and hoping to cut the corner that man Byway added a little more to the Controller's workload by enquiring with his slick R/T procedure whether he might be granted a special VFR clearance to cross the zone on a direct track to Barton. However for some reason he failed to give all his flight details to the Air Traffic Controller. With the full fleet of aircraft working the same frequency at the same time, just about everybody overheard the following conversation :-

Byway : (very professional super smooth accent)

"Manchester Approach this is Golf Lima-Kilo looking for a Special"

Controller : (very irate, sarcastic accent)

"Golf Lima Kilo-Are you going to tell me the rest or have I got to guess it ?"

Suffice it to say that the whole party eventually found their way back to Barton where the leg-pulling of this very popular instructor continued for some considerable time. Not least of which, his request for a 'special' or his inability to account for his underpants are still talked about by those people who went on that trip. In fact another story was circulated about him concerning a young lady, the 'pill' and a 'packet' but discretion prevents me from giving any further details.

Regrettably the next planned Fly-Out, which was supposed to be another overnight stay, this time on a caravan site adjacent to the Caernarfon Airfield, had to be cancelled due to bad weather. Sadly Edward Pape moved on to pastures new shortly afterwards and no such similar events have been organised on such a scale in recent years.

"One of our Aeroplanes is Missing"

Regrettably we do not live in a perfect world and cases of articles being stolen from aircraft are not unknown, but fortunately incidents involving actual theft of aircraft show no signs of reaching the same proportions as 'joy-riders' have reached with cars. Nevertheless Barton has had a couple of incidents involving disappearing machines.

The first case arose on a Saturday evening in the summer of 1976. As was customary in those days, at the end of the day's flying all the aircraft were refuelled and then put away in the hangar for the night. There was little evidence of security and the aircraft doors were left unlocked with the keys simply placed in the glove compartments. The hangar doors were pushed closed but no attempt was made to lock the doors.

Sunday morning dawned but before the hangar doors could be opened, a telephone call was received from the nearby airfield of Crosland Moor. The conversation which was short and precise went something like this :-

"Have you lost one of your aircraft ?"

Closer investigation of the hangar revealed that the Club Cessna 172, G-ARLW had in fact disappeared.

Apparently the owner of the airfield in Yorkshire had arrived on the Sunday morning to find the Cessna languishing at the end of his runway. There was no evidence of how the machine had got there and it could only be assumed that it had been flown in from Barton before the population had risen from its slumber. Recognising it as belonging to the Lancashire Aero Club he had no alternative but to get on the telephone and report it as having been found - before it was missed.

To this day it has never been proved whether the aircraft had in fact been stolen, taken as a practical joke or just removed to demonstrate the lack of security.

Toy Town

When a Barton Group advertised their Cessna 172 for sale in *Pilot* Magazine they got a punter who tried to pay for it in toy money, then stole the aircraft and flew it to France, hotly pursued by everybody, including the British press. Paul Tomlin told the story in the September 1986 issue of the magazine under the headline"Advertising in *Pilot* gets results"

"When Mike Allcock placed a for-sale advertisement in April *Pilot* he wasn't planning on creating an international incident, nor was he setting out to close down a major airport; and by no stretch of the imagination could he envisage a French Air Force Mirage being scrambled from a base north of Paris ! But truth can be stranger than fiction: so read on !

Saturday May 24 1986 will be a day long remembered at Barton. It was a pleasant enough

day, with a high bright overcast: routine club and private flying was under way, and Lancashire Aero Club instructor Mike Briggs and student Jeremy Rodgers had just completed a dual cross-country in a Slingsby T67, which was being topped up preparatory to Jeremy departing solo. Mike Allcock had arranged to meet a Mr. 'Jack Graham' who had responded favourably to the advert placed in *Pilot* featuring the group's 21-year-old Cessna 172 on offer at the bargain price of £8,500.

Around mid-day Mr 'Graham', a smartly-dressed man of 60 odd years of age, parked his BMW in the club car park. Following a general discussion and aircraft inspection, a trial flight was proposed, with Mr 'Graham' flying the Cessna quite confidently from the left-hand seat. The aircraft was tied down on its parking spot, and everyone retired to the clubhouse.

"I had to get it near the runway for my scheme to work" said Mr 'Graham' later "so I asked for a second flight."

Leaving the aircraft at the fuel pumps, further discussion took place back at the clubhouse as the plane was refuelled. Expressing satisfaction with the aircraft, a deal was clinched and Mr 'Graham' handed over a money-belt pouch which he said contained £8,500 in notes.

"I did not want to count such a large sum of money in a crowded room" said Mike Allcock; "so I went to the car park to count it in the car." A cursory glance suggested that all the notes were U.S. dollars, so Mike returned to the clubhouse to tell Mr 'Graham' that he would like to be paid in sterling.

Meanwhile Mr 'Graham' had lifted the plane's keys off the table and excused himself, saying that he wanted to arrange the collection of his car. He then legged it hot-foot across the airfield, climbed into the 172 started up, and from a near standing start, nearly knocking over a fuel pump attendant, made a rapid non-standard departure, cutting across the airfield's main runway and climbing erratically away through the circuit traffic.

An instructor inquired of the tower who the pilot of the 172 was and what did he think he was doing ? Barton tower, despite repeated calls, could not raise any response on the R/T. "Ask the pilot to report to me when he returns" in the light of what was to follow was a somewhat amusing request from the instructor.

The 172 lurched off on a westerly heading in the direction of Liverpool. Doubts about the legality of the flight were soon raised, and Mike Briggs and Jeremy Rodgers decided to set off in hot pursuit. Meanwhile Mike Allcock had checked the contents of the money pouch more closely, and to his horror realised that he had been paid in toy money drawn on the Bank of Chun Fat Toy ! Racing across to the tower he confirmed that the plane had indeed been stolen.

A notepad tossed out of the aircraft contained a scribbled message: "Dear Mike, sorry about this. My need is greater than yours. I will return the

plane in two days. Keep the car. If you tell the police it will be destroyed." An inbound Minicab reported over Warrington and joined in the chase as the formation turned south down the M6 motorway just east of the low-level corridor and just inside the Manchester Control Zone.

At this stage security forces at Manchester International Airport went on full alert in case of a possible terrorist attack, and airliner traffic was halted for twenty minutes as the Cessna passed through the outbound SID tracks. The Minicab's fuel state made it give up the chase, meanwhile the T67 was endeavouring to attract the attention of the 172's pilot by flying in front of his aircraft.

Leaving the Manchester TMA at Crewe, the 172 turned on a south-easterly heading, maintaining various heights between one and two thousand feet at eighty knots. What was puzzling Mike Briggs in the chase plane was that the Cessna pilot obviously knew a fair bit about airmanship from the way he was avoiding control zones and their height limitations. Other airports were now being alerted in case of aerial terrorist attack.

With the T67 watching its every move the 172 flew on, passing Cambridge and Southend and out across the Kent coast near Lydd. At this point the Slingsby's fuel situation was such that it was prudent to drop out of the chase - but not before handing over to a Manston-based RAF rescue Wessex flown by Flt.Lt.Ron Jackson. "He was flying at about 3,000 feet, well in control. He knew we were following him, but seemed determined to carry on" said the helicopter's pilot. A message was received back at Barton that the 172 had crossed the French coast near Boulogne, still maintaining its southerly course.

Nearly six hours after leaving Barton and now low on fuel, the 172, now being shadowed by a French Air Force Mirage - which apparently had authority to open fire on the Cessna had it continued any closer to Paris - decided to put down at Creil military air base thirty miles from Paris.

Spotting military personnel approaching, the Cessna pilot tried to take-off again, but was foiled by Flt.Lt.Jackson landing his Wessex in front of it, thereby halting its Take-off.

Meanwhile, back at Barton, bar sales were reaching new heights as the nation's news-thirsty press and television crews descended on the clubhouse. In those few hours the Cessna's value had rocketed: one local radio station was reporting the theft of a £20,000 Cessna ! Many questions brought forth just as many answers, theories and counter-theories. Who was he ? Why did he do it? Who pays for the fuel for the Slingsby's round trip ? How do we get the aircraft back ? French television were on the phone booking an interview should someone eventually arrive to collect the Cessna.

Some of the mystery surrounding this bizarre story began to unfold later when Mr 'Graham' appeared in court at Senlis near Paris. Mr 'Graham' was really Robert Grant a 59-year-old

retired Tyne & Wear County Council official from Darras Hall, Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Though he had completed nearly seventy hours of flight instruction, hardly any of it was solo - and that had been thirty years ago. "I had forgotten nearly everything, and planes were very different in those days !" said Grant as the French magistrate released him without charge. Apparently he had been planning something like this for some months, and had sent off for a flying suit and maps. He spotted the joke toy-money in a London shop. "From a distance it looks amazingly like American dollars" he said.

Grant later flew into Heathrow from Paris, this time courtesy of British Airways, and was immediately arrested by airport police. He appeared in a Manchester magistrate's court, where he was charged with - in those quaint terms of the legal profession - "Taking a conveyance, namely a Cessna aircraft" He also faced two further charges, that of taking the car and driving without insurance.

Mike Allcock's predicament as to the return of the 172 was eventually sorted out with the generosity of a national newspaper who flew him to Paris. And so G-ATBK flew back to Barton to be greeted by a message that another chap had been on the phone asking if the aircraft was still for sale! "For the right sort of money" was the reply.

So advertisements in Pilot do work !

The case went before the Eccles magistrates on July 3, 1986 where Robert Grant pleaded guilty to the three charges. He was sentenced to six month's imprisonment, half of it suspended, and ordered to pay £860.76 compensation. (He later appealed against the sentence.)

Grant had first planned on hitch-hiking to Barton on the morning of the 24th, but decided that a better impression would be given if he arrived in a high-class motor-car. accordingly he had contacted a dealer and arranged a meeting outside a hotel. During the test drive Grant requested that he be allowed to drive the car. As the two men were changing seats Grant drove off, leaving the salesman stranded by the roadside ! Grant drove into the Lancashire Aero Club car-park for his meeting with Mike Allcock.

Grant was seemingly obsessed with pulling off a publicity stunt as a means of advancing the Help the Aged cause. He had earlier written to the charity outlining his intention of taking up flying lessons and flying to Paris and back, thereby gaining publicity for their cause. He also contacted the Lions Club with a suggestion that a competition be organised in which the competitor who travelled the farthest distance by any means of his choice would win. Both organisations turned down his suggestions; but undaunted Grant decided to go it alone.

Although he had held an American PPL many years ago, he had no recent flying experience. So at personal expense he had embarked on a course of flying lessons with a 'London-based' school.

Grant claimed that he had planned on flying the aircraft back to Barton and then returning the car to its rightful owner. At no time did he intend keeping the car or the aircraft, nor indeed had he planned on escaping justice.

The Roving Gypsy

In February 1939 a batch of 10 de Havilland Tiger Moths were delivered to Number 17 ERFTS which was operated by Airwork at Barton. Included in the batch was a machine with construction number 3803 which was allocated military serial number N6466. However when the Unit was closed down all the aircraft were transferred to Yatesbury on 17th September 1939.

The Tiger Moth continued on its travels via Weston-Super-Mare and Stoke Orchard where it was damaged on 7th July 1941 when a pilot, on his second solo flight, stalled on landing. Following repairs it spent the rest of the war at Burnaston and was then put into storage at Cosford in July 1945.

Re-issued in 1946, further moves found the aircraft at Shellingford, Abingdon, Cambridge, Woodley, Kidlington and then it was damaged in a collision with an Auster at Shoreham in 1948. Yet more repairs resulted in the machine continuing its travels through Hamble, Digby and on to Kirkbride in March 1953 where it was put into storage.

In November 1953 it was sold to A.J.Whittemore(Aeradio)Ltd and ferried to Croydon. On 30th December 1953, N6466 was allocated a civilian registration G-ANKZ and ferried to Thruxton from where it was sold in France in 1955.

Registered F-BHIO the aircraft was operated by Aero Club de Dax until 1957 when it crashed. Following a period in storage the airframe was shipped to the U.S.A., however no attempt was made at restoration. Eventually the remains were returned to the U.K. in 1982 via Ron Souch and Cliff Lovell who then registered the aeroplane to Beverley Oates in 1983.

The frame was moved to Barton for the lengthy restoration by Basil Carlin of Barton Moss Engineering. In November 1987 the Tiger Moth's Certificate of Airworthiness was at last renewed and ownership finally passed to Rowan Stephens in 1989 who now flies 'KZ regularly from Barton under the guise of its original military serial number.

So the "Roving Gypsy" eventually found its way back to the Barton skies, where it had commenced its flying career, after an incredible journey lasting almost fifty years.

Today, loving care and attention keep this venerable old lady in immaculate condition and none cherish her more than Ken Brown who looks after her every need in Rowan's absence.

The 1930's Fly-In and Garden Party.

The Popular Flying Association held its first

rally at Sywell Aerodrome, Northamptonshire in 1969. Sadly the weekend was totally ruined by bad weather with poor visibility making the event a complete washout. Fortunately the organisers were far-sighted enough to take out weather insurance and thus avoided financial ruin. Nevertheless and undaunted, further rallies were organised in the following years under the title "F3" (Flying For Fun) and the attendance figures started to increase.

The PFA Annual Rally was thus established and continued to grow in stature quickly becoming recognised as the major light aviation event in Europe, second only to the Oshkosh gathering in the U.S.A. Increasing numbers of international visitors were attending, many of whom came in home-built machines, from countries far and wide. The most intrepid aviator must have been Clive Canning who flew his own construction a Thorpe T.18, all the way from Australia in 1976.

Sywell was (and still is) a beautiful grass airfield which became synonymous with the PFA Annual Rally. The dates always co-incided with the Wimbledon Finals Weekend and after the initial disappointment were always blessed with wonderful weather. Eventually the popularity of the event grew to such a magnitude that Sywell could no longer accommodate the number of visitors attending and a larger venue had to be found.

In 1979 the gathering moved to Leicester, which burst its seams in only three years; a second move was made to Cranfield in 1982 before moving on again this time to Wroughton in 1991. However there are many who still lament over the days at Sywell believing that the larger events have lost some of the original relaxed atmosphere. (Incidentally Club member Dave Greenwood brought home the major trophy for the best aircraft at the 1980 rally, the Concours d'Elegance for his homebuilt Baby Great Lakes G-BGEI)

While all this was going on, local struts were increasingly organising their own Fly-Ins/Rallies and the North Western Strut was no exception. Having already found Barton to be the most suitable location for its monthly meetings, it was not long before suggestions were being put forward for a rally to be organised. Naturally Barton offered the most genial surroundings and plans were duly laid.

The early rallies at Barton were just one-day events which were not particularly well attended and indifferent weather on some of the dates did little to help. But then enter Peter Underhill.

Peter had gained his P.P.L. at Liverpool and shortly afterwards purchased a Piper Cub which he based at Barton. Looking for an aircraft with an improved performance, he went on to purchase a Jodel D.150 which went on to develop into a love affair between Peter and his French designed aircraft. Such was his affection for the family of bent-wing designs that he went on to form the Jodel Club which flourishes to this day.

One Sunday afternoon in the Barton clubhouse,

several of the strut members were discussing the Fly-In, mainly with regret that more people did not attend. It was Peter who suggested that we should try to re-create the "Sywell Days" which were probably very similar to Garden Parties which had been a prominent feature during the times when the Lancashire Aero Club was based at Woodford. "And while we are at it why not make it a two-day event."

Such is the man's influence and enthusiasm for all the tasks that he ever tackles, that before long the whole clubhouse was buzzing with the idea. Whereas the rallies had so far been organised by the North Western Strut, here was a chance for both the Strut and the Lancashire Aero Club to work together on a joint venture.

It was felt that many pilots were probably nervous of flying to Barton because of the close proximity to the controlled airspace of Manchester International Airport. Although the "Freelane" or "Low Level Corridor" provides an easy access for traffic coming from the South, it was thought that many pilots were still apprehensive of its constrictions.

Peter's solution was to write an article which was published in the May 1981 edition of 'Pilot' magazine. In it he publicised the rally explaining how it was hoped to stage an event which would generate the Garden Party type of atmosphere reminiscent of the 1930's and of the famous Sywell Rallies. Of equal importance he also very skillfully described the ease with which the Low Level Corridor could be navigated even by non-radio aircraft; but the genius must surely have been in the choice of title:-

"I Dare You to Fly to Barton."

Peter Underhill's excellent writing skills had the desired effect and in the end, a record number of aircraft flew into Barton during the rally. The final count realised a total of over 120 aeroplanes over the weekend, with some local machines appearing on both days flown in by different pilots. Visitors arrived from all over the country and such was the enthusiasm generated by the article that arrivals were also booked in from France, Belgium and Germany.

Any unsuspecting visitors unaware of what was going on would probably have thought they had been transported back in time. A Vintage Car Rally had also been arranged and together with the proliferation of Parasols, Straw Boaters, Striped Blazers, White Flannels and the like, which were being paraded around the airfield to the tune of Brass Band Music, Barton had been transformed back to a bygone era.

The Lancashire Aero Club as hosts, working together with the North Western Strut, had put together a magical weekend which was immediately established on the light aviation social calendar. Sadly business commitments forced Peter to move South shortly afterwards, taking his Jodel with him. Since then he has gone on to achieve fame as the editor of the PFA Journal and as a regular contributor to several aviation

periodicals. The 1930's Garden Party and Fly-In in the meantime has continued under the same theme and regularly attracts large numbers of visitors, including several regulars who fly considerable distances each year to savour the famous hospitality at Barton.

A new innovation was introduced in the following year with a hangar dance being staged on the Saturday evening. All the resident aeroplanes were moved out of the hangar nearest to the clubhouse and a stage erected at the far end to accommodate a Glen Miller Type 'Big Band'. This proved to be a very popular addition to the weekend and is now a regular feature maintaining the attractiveness of the rally although sadly the record number of visiting aircraft has never been beat.

Mention has already been made of Dave Greenwood who brought home the much coveted Concours d'Elegance Trophy from the 1980 Annual PFA Rally. The Popular Flying Association is very much about building one's own aeroplane, which is in itself a remarkable feat and which has been undertaken by quite a few Lancashire Aero Club members. Dave wrote the following piece, which bears testimony to the dedication and determination needed to complete such a project; which of course is very much in the tradition of the founder members of the Club.

In 1970 the American Aerobatic Team came to England to compete in the World Aerobatic Championships at Hullavington. The weekend prior to this had been the annual PFA Rally at Sywell where the "Yanks" had honoured us with their presence and amazed me with their aerobatic skills and daring. I could not really believe what I saw, the Pitts Special of Bob Herendeen performed manoeuvres I did not believe possible. It was this that decided me that I would have to have a bi-plane and if possible it was going to be a Pitts Special.....

The next few weeks were spent trying to find out about Pitts Specials, but it did not take me long to come down to earth and realise that 180 hp meant cash and a lot of it; and in 1970 cash I did not have. There had to be an alternative so I started to look for a small bi-plane with a respectable performance. However not long after the Pitts experience a Tipsy Nipper became available which was too much to resist and my bi-plane ideas were shelved for three years.

The trouble with owning your own aeroplane is that you tend to visit air displays around the country and this means that you are bound to see a Pitts or a Jungmeister and this never failed to set my mind thinking about bi-planes again. I had to have one and that meant building one as I could not afford to buy one outright.

My investigations had led me to the Oldfield Baby Lakes because of its small size and what seemed to be "rocket performance" on 65 hp. It

even looked a bit like a Pitts..... The decision was made and I sent for plans. That was the start of a 6^{1/2} year slog which at the time I was convinced would take me 2 years. How wrong can you be ?

The plans arrived and consisted of about 35 drawings, most of them full size. The drawings are mostly self explanatory but there is a book of words if you are not sure. I decided that as there were a lot of "wing bits" I would make them first and get them out of the way. The chord is constant on both wings so the same jig can be used for all ribs, which makes life a lot easier. On a good night I could make 2 ribs but usually I managed only one.

Not long after I started on the ribs I heard that there was a pile of Baby Lakes bits from an abandoned project near Basingstoke, so a few telephone calls were made which led to a quick trip South in a borrowed truck. I came away with a lot of steel tubing for the fuselage, tailplane and rudder, all the wood for the mainspars planed and ready for use, wheels and brakes. This find was a great help to me as the T45 tubing for the fuselage was very scarce at the time, as well as being very expensive.

I gradually worked through all the metal fittings for the wings until I had all the parts ready for assembly. However because of space considerations I decided that I would not put the wings together until a later date.

Because the fuselage is constructed from steel tube, I had to pass the C.A.A. Welding Test. This problem was worrying me, but the C.A.A. were very helpful and a telephone call to a Mr Thompson at Ringway was all that was needed to put my mind at rest. After two attempts at the three test pieces I had my welding approval and this enabled me to continue with the fuselage and tailplane.

The fuselage sides are made on a flat board in a simple jig. The two sides are joined together with the cross tubes which are tack welded in. All that has to be done then is bend each longeron over behind the cockpit section, so that each fuselage side meets on the centre line at the back end. The stern post is welded in and that is it; one fuselage. Sounds simple, does it not ? Not so, it takes a great deal of care to keep the fuselage straight whilst it is welded.

It was at this point that I decided that I did not like steel tube fuselages. I now had to weld on all the brackets, bushes, and numerous other bits and pieces that would make my fuselage into an aeroplane and this took me a long, long, long time.

The problem of a suitable engine had been nagging at my already overtaxed brain for some time. As I wanted my Baby to perform like a Saturn Rocket, I was looking for a Continental 0200A, but the cost was holding me back.

Whilst on the telephone to Harvey Swack (the plans vendor in the States), the question of the engine came up and I told him of my desire for an 0200A. He promptly asked me my weight and

when I told him 126lbs he laughed and advised me to put an A65 in and added that if I used this engine I would get all the performance I needed. I knew where there was an A65, complete with magnetos and carburettor, so it did not take me long to ring Ken Davies at Chester to see if he still had the much needed engine. Fortunately he had, so we agreed a price and I had an engine. (He still says I robbed him.)

One of the lessons you learn fairly quickly when you build an aeroplane, is that you have to be a good scrounger. If you see a part you might need, grab it because you might not see one again. A friend of mine who was building a Sonerai somewhat lightheartedly said he would never let me loose in his workshop in case I pinched part of his aeroplane for my own project. (Maybe that is why he could not get it finished)

Well four years had drifted by and I now had an assortment of wing bits and a fuselage with tail feathers and wheels. I started to put the wings together which was a fairly simple though time consuming job. I used Ceconite 101 to cover the aeroplane and after struggling with linen on other aeroplanes, I was amazed at the simplicity of using it. I would recommend anybody considering what to use on their aeroplane to use Ceconite.

Now I nearly had an aeroplane, all I needed was engine cowls, propeller and flying wires. I had a rigging session in my garden so that I could measure for the wires. I think the neighbours thought I was a nut, anyway I could now order the streamlined wires. I rang Brunton's in Scotland and they sent me a quote which nearly gave me a heart attack, so I rang Wag Aero in the "Good old USA". They sent me a quote which was less than half of the Brunton price, so I sent them the order.

The prop' was made by Roy Watling Greenwood (not related). Now that I have flown the aeroplane it is obvious that he knows his "Stuff".

The cowls took a lot of effort and certainly a lot of time. I had bought a fibre glass copy of a Cub nose bowl from Dicky Bird, but the rest were made from sheet dural. What a pain....

One thing that always annoyed me with home builtts was the exhaust systems that most people used, four separate stacks just do not sound right. So it took me a month to plumb all the pipes into one single outlet underneath the aeroplane; result less drag and it sounded nice, maybe even like a Pitts....

When I thought I had nearly finished the aeroplane, there was still a lot of work to do. Wing fillet stays, cockpit trim, flying wire, tie rods, etc. etc. It was not until I came to rigging the whole thing together that I realised just how long all the bits and pieces had taken.

Anyway I finally managed to complete the aircraft in April 1980

Tom Smith from Speedwell Sailplanes did the final rigging, weight and balance schedules, and a test permit from the PFA was applied for.

The reality that the aeroplane was finished took quite a time to sink in and now I had to think very seriously about flying it. I decided that I would do some fast taxiing and if everything went well and nothing fell off that I would have a go. The fast taxiing was fairly easy, the ailerons and rigging seemed O.K. so after a final check on everything I attempted a take-off. At 50 m.p.h. it leaped off the ground and climbed away quite briskly. I climbed to a good height and tried a few shallow turns and finally a very gentle stall so that I would know at what speed to approach the runway.

The landing was not easy as it was a calm day, I was being very careful and came in too fast, nevertheless I managed to land safely. It is preferable to make a curved approach because once the nose is brought up you cannot see a lot over it. The classic bi-plane side slip approach is probably the best way to land the aeroplane.

So that was it, I had done it and it was still in one piece and it really did fly, so I went and did it again, again and again.

That was on 15th June 1980 and after completing 20 hours there were no major problems. The aircraft is a delight to fly, the cockpit is not draughty and can be flown without goggles. The view from the cockpit is good either above the top wing or below it. The cruise speed is about 105-110 m.p.h. with a maximum speed about 125 m.p.h. The engine uses about 3½ gallons per hour so it's quite economical.

The aircraft has not quite got Pitts performance but it does perform very well on only 65 hp and it is not using 8 gallons per hour like a Pitts. (With todays fuel prices I am glad I chose a Baby Lakes.) I still look at Pitts Specials in that special way and I would love to fly one, perhaps sometime in the future I will.

Anyway most Sunday afternoons a plane spotter will come up to me and say "Is it a Pitts Mister ?"

Airshows.

For many years in the sixties and seventies the main airshow event in the North West was organised by the Royal Air Forces Association at Woodford, which attracted the largest crowds in the region. Probably the biggest attendance was on Saturday 26th June 1971 when it was estimated that almost 100,000 people gathered to witness the first appearance of Concorde in this part of the world.

Displays were organised by the Lancashire Aero Club at Barton on a much smaller scale and could only in reality be described as "Open Days". Occasional displays were also performed at Barton under the organisation of a team known as the Barnstormers. The team would put on a display and in return for the use of the airfield, would pay a small percentage of the gate receipts to the Club. The Club's only involvement was to provide manpower for car-parking and security etc.

Participants in the display on 15th August 1971 included a Chipmunk, Tipsy Nipper, Rothmans Duo (presumably Stamps or possibly Pitts Specials) Islander and the Blue Eagles (Army Helicopter Team). Also performing in this and every other display to date were the Bollington Parascending Club, who use Barton to practice every Saturday and Sunday morning during the summer months.

Being a keen aircraft spotter, reference to my spotting log books reveal that my first visit to a display at Barton was on Sunday 17th September 1972, which was billed as the Lancashire Aero Club's Fiftieth Anniversary Open Day. Quite a large number of visiting aircraft had turned up but were mostly straight and level machines. The most interesting visitor was the DH60 G-EBLV, which although I did not know it at the time, had of course belonged to the Club back in the 1920's. I recall that the runway in use was 33 (now renumbered 32/14) which runs along the eastern boundary of the airfield and is only 400 metres long.

The main runway 27/09 could not be used because it dissects the airfield in half and leaves very little space for accommodating any parked vehicles. However with the prevailing winds in this country being mainly westerly or easterly, runway 33/32 suffered from cross-winds making landings rather difficult. The main part of diplay consisted of a flypast of machines representative of those which had been used on the Club fleet including the DH 60 Moth, Tiger Moth, Auster, Tri-Pacer, Cessna 150 and Cessna 172.

My next visit to a display was on Sunday 14th July 1974 when the runway in use was still 33. More displays were given this time than on my last visit including aerobatic performances by Pitts Special G-AZPH, Stamps G-ASHS, G-ATKC and G-AWEF from the Tiger Club and Zlin Akrobat G-AWJX sponsored by Players Goldleaf.

Barton on the 15th of August 1976 had taken on a different layout for the display. The new runway 24/06 had now been brought into use along the northern boundary of the airfield. Whilst still being considerably shorter than the main runway, at least it was into wind and allowed for plenty of car parking space. The event was beginning to grow in stature attracting various military participants including the first appearance at Barton of the Red Arrows, together with two C130 hercules, RAF Gazelles, and the Falcons parachute team. With no other claimant to the title it had been realised that the event could be christened the "Manchester Airshow" and crowds approaching 20,000 were now being attracted.

I joined the Club in January 1981 and was invited by Peter Underhill to join him on the commentary team along with Squadron Leader Mike Whitehouse (a former Red Arrows Team Manager) mainly because I was well practised at using a microphone as a Disc Jockey. Only when I began to speak over the public address system did I realise that the echo from the loudspeakers, which were dotted all around the airfield, had such a

disorienting effect on one's ears that it was not possible to put a sentence together without wearing earphones to cut out all the ancillary noise. (Something far different than I had ever experienced before.)

The airshow was certainly progressing with participants including a Whirlwind helicopter, Fieseler Storch, Provost, Akro Sports, C130 Hercules, Vulcan and the Red Arrows. However one of my favourite displays was the glider which was flown to a musical arrangement for the first time that year. This has now become a traditional opening routine ever since; each year being to a different piece of music. The crowd level was improving slightly and was now estimated to be reaching the 25,000 mark.

In 1982 Clive Barron joined the airshow team primarily to add his skills in marketing, to attract larger crowds. Clive's contacts in the media industry were invaluable and the coverage that year was overwhelming. However with only a few weeks to go it was realised that very few acts had been confirmed and time was running out. Responsibility for putting the show together was hurriedly taken over by Clive along with Roger Reeves and Brian Harbit and a demand was made to the Committee for a budget of £9,000, to which a reluctant agreement was given. Fortunately Roger Reeves had considerable contacts in the displaying fraternity and miraculously between the three of them a full programme was put together.

I had been given the responsibility for writing the Airshow Souvenir Brochure but was struggling through a lack of material. Somehow with Clive's help at the last minute we fudged together articles, pictures, quizzes and advertisements to almost fill the booklet. However further inspiration was needed when we realised that we still had one blank page with no further material. The answer was quite simple really - the empty page was headed "Pilot's Autographs"! The brochures arrived on the morning of the show, hot off the presses with the ink barely dry and just in time for distribution to the arriving crowds.

The publicity which Clive had aroused had the desired effect. Included in his promotional work was a "Press Day" performance, on the Friday morning, of a few aircraft which were due to appear on the Sunday. The most memorable display was given by Jim Buckingham in the Miles Gemini G-AKKB which of course had been based at Barton when it was owned by Fred Dunkerley. The Control Tower was duly buzzed several times in true Dunkerley style, much to the excitement of those assembled on the balcony. Also included in the performance was the vintage Barton resident Spartan Arrow G-ABWP. Owned by Club member Ray Blain since 1964, this is the only surviving example of a batch of aeroplanes built by the Spartan Company on the Isle of Wight in 1932. Once owned by the famous Richard Shuttleworth, the machine had first visited Barton in 1935. Ray first brought the machine to Barton in 1979 and it has appeared in the display or as a static exhibit ever since.

As a result of all the coverage given by both television channels, local radio and the press a record crowd flocked to Barton. Such was the influx of traffic trying to get in, that queues backed-up over the Barton Bridge onto the M63 Motorway and the gates had to be closed by mid-day. The crowds went home at the end of the day absolutely thrilled by what they had seen.

What had they seen? Undoubtedly this had been the most impressive programme ever put together for the Manchester Airshow so far. In fact there were 25 different displays which included USAF participation of C141 Starlifter, A10 Thunderbolt, F4 Phantom, F-111. RAF/Navy participants included Jaguar, Whirlwind, Wessex, Vulcan and the Red Arrows. Civilian displays were given by British Aerospace BAe 125, Boeing Stearman, Grumman Bearcat, Wing Commander Wallis's Autogyro "Little Nellie" (with plenty of pyrotechnics), and one of the most "crazy" flying displays I have ever seen, which was performed by the Club's C.F.I. at the time, Don Graham.

But the highlight of the show for me and will always live in my memory was the Air Atlantique Dc3. The sight of this incredible aeroplane performing a 'touch-and-go' and bringing up a chalk dust-cloud from the numbers of Runway 24 will never be forgotten by those fortunate enough to see it.

No amount of praise would be too great for the Air Traffic Controllers who had come across from Manchester Airport for the day. The radio at Barton is operated on a 'ground to air' basis whereby information can be exchanged without any formal instructions being given. Obviously this would not be sufficient for an airshow, hence the need for fully qualified air traffic controllers. The Club were very fortunate indeed to have recruited Tony Brown and Paul Eite, who had first come to the Club's assistance for the Barnstormers display in 1971, as a result of a request by the famous Charlie Rollo.

Only by being in the tower on the day of the Airshow is it possible to realise just how much co-ordination is necessary between Tony and Paul, via a direct telephone line, with their colleagues operating the radar facilities at Manchester Airport. The control of so many aircraft to a split second timetable has now become legendary and the fame which the Manchester Airshow has now built up for its un-interrupted display is totally attributable to these two enthusiastic and professional men. In fact such is their fame that they have now become a very influential factor in attracting many of the most famous display pilots to the event.

In 1983 Clive was officially appointed as 'Airshow Director' and several more innovative ideas were introduced including a "Park-and-Ride" scheme operated jointly with Greater Manchester Buses and for sheer audacity, one of the Airshow Posters appeared for the first time on the walls of the "Rovers Return" which of course appears nationwide in Granada TV's Coronation Street. (This is yet another item which has become a yearly tradition and it has become a pre-occupation

with many people to spot the poster as airshow time approaches.)

For the first time, the Friday Press Day performances were moved to Manchester Airport to give the media a chance to get some ground shots of the larger machines, which could not of course land on even Barton's longest runway. A fleet of aircraft positioned from Barton carrying reporters, cameramen and Club members. Several taildraggers also appeared at Manchester but once on the ground it was found that gusty wind conditions were proving too difficult for them to be manouvre to the area designated for their parking. Passengers therefore had to disembark to assist with "Wing Walking" which is not a very common sight at this large international airport!

Nevertheless the press gathering was to prove yet another vital aspect in increasing the public's awareness of the event. Success followed upon success and the attendance records at the ensuing display were broken again. The number of displays rose to a staggering 36, crammed into an action packed 5 hour programme. Such was the reputation now surrounding the gathering that the Club set up a separate Company registered as "Manchester Airshows Ltd."

In 1984 the Friday Press Day reverted back to Barton. The morning dawned fine and as this part of the airshow preparation was becoming just as popular as the main event, quite a large crowd gathered in anticipation. This was going to be a special day because included in the morning's programme were a Junkers Ju-52, a Spitfire and the Trago Mills SAH 1. All were scheduled to land at Barton which were destined to make this a quite historical day.

The Junkers duly arrived to make a perfect touch-down on Runway 27, to make this the largest aircraft to land at Barton for many years. The Spitfire Mark XIV painted all red and carrying the registration G-FIRE followed shortly afterwards to become the first of its type to land on the airfield for an equally long period of time. Finally the Trago Mills SAH 1 prototype training aircraft which was scheduled to make its first public appearance at an Airshow.

The weekend weather continued fine and the members working on the airfield on the Saturday afternoon were treated to a memorable "beat-up" of the Clubhouse by the de Havilland Mosquito RR299. On the Sunday morning the gates were opened early to allow the queues of traffic to get in off the roads and Mike Hunter entertained the early birds as he snatched up a banner advertising the Airshow, which he duly towed behind his Rallye G-BFMS all morning.

The Airshow got underway in front of yet another full house and provided the same quantity and quality of entertainment as in the previous year. The Junkers 52 had stayed at Barton all weekend and had been positioned in front of the crowd line for ease of taxi-ing. However when the time came to move to the runway it was found that the wheels of this very heavy machine had sunk into the soft Barton grass. A multitude of airshow

helpers then had to be summoned to help push the monster onto firmer ground.

Once the aircraft was lined up on runway 06, pilot "Jeff" Hawke demonstrated an amazingly short take-off and then flew the lumbering giant up and down the crowd-lines pretending to strafe the spectators with mock gunfire from a turret mounted on the upper fuselage. But then enter the Spitfire! Flown by a great friend of the Club, Flt. Lt. Peter Thorne, the all-red Mark XIV appeared with mock-guns blazing to see off the attacker who then disappeared to the West trailing smoke. Wonderful Stuff!

Later in the afternoon the crowd were treated to a display by a replica of another famous German aircraft. This time Baron Von Richthofen's red Tri-Plane (the Dreidecker) chased about the skies to the musical accompaniment of "Snoopy versus the Red Baron".

British Airways made a very spirited appearance with a BAC 1-11 flown by Captain Chris Wren. This is thought to have been the first ever display of an "in-service" 1-11 owned by the "World's Favourite Airline" and such was the pilot's level of preparation for the display that he had even gone to the trouble of practicing the routine on a British Aerospace simulator. But most incredible was the fact that every seat in the jet-aircraft was full! The flight had been advertised as an opportunity to take a pleasure flight in a jet-airliner to coincide with the Airshow. All the seats had been snapped up by enthusiasts who were reported as having thoroughly enjoyed the trip. Their only regret was having to put just about every available sick-bag to good use!

British and American military hardware interspersed with civilian aerobatic displays and a Grumman Ag-Cat Crop Sprayer gave a simulated demonstration dowsing the runway with just plain ordinary water. Originality had been at the forefront of yet another magical attraction which had gone off like clockwork.

Only one unexpected snag arose as a result of the Harrier display. As is the tradition in this demonstration, the final manoeuvre involves the pilot facing the aircraft towards the crowd in the hover position. The aircraft's nose is bowed to the crowd before departing in an ear-bursting climb into the sky.

The 21,000 lb. of thrust generated by the Pegasus engines then gave a demonstration of how to blast away a field of carrots in only a few seconds. That is what a local farmer had planted in his field just to the north of the airfield and his claim for lost crops was the most unexpected bill to be received that year.

I could go on writing about each year's event but that really ought to appear in a book all of its own. To cut a few corners I can only say that in each subsequent year, the show continued to grow both in content and crowds attending. In 1988 an adjacent field to Barton, which belonged to the Club, but had never been put to use, was made accessible to accommodate more vehicles in

anticipation of the Airshow which featured Concorde as the star attraction.

But Barton Bridge put a stop to any thoughts of staging a display in 1989. As the M63 Motorway passed over the Manchester Ship Canal this famous landmark carried only two lanes in each direction. With traffic continually increasing the jams were becoming worse so that in the end the only solution was to widen the bridge to provide an extra lane on each side.

The project caused even worse traffic jams during the period of construction; so-much-so that Barton Bridge became a household name with daily bulletins on T.V. and Radio. So it was that in 1989 an agonising decision had to be taken to postpone the Airshow because the local roads simply could not handle the volume of traffic. Fortunately a year later the Manchester Airshow was re-instated but the attendance figures were a little disappointing.

The early part of 1991 cast doubts over the prospects of any military participation because of the Gulf Conflict. Fortunately peace had returned in time for a full programme to be maintained and the crowd levels started to move in the right direction again.

This therefore brings us to the 1992 display. By the time the first Airshow helpers meetings were being announced, I was already heavily occupied in preparing this book. Something had to give way and in the end the Airshow had to come first. As I write these last few pages, (later than I had planned) the 1992 Manchester Airshow had now come and gone. Reports of yet further record attendances (estimated at over 60,000) and gate receipts are now being passed around the Clubhouse thanks to another fantastic performance by all those involved in the organisation of the Airshow.

Whilst it would not be possible to mention all the names of the hundreds of helpers, special mention must be made of Tracy Shaw who is employed as Airshow Co-ordinator to handle the many administrative tasks. Madge Hackney, who with her girls in the Clubhouse supply all the helpers with nourishment from 5 O'clock in the morning; and Dave Monks and the groundstaff who start the airfield preparation weeks in advance.

On its Seventieth Anniversary the Club can celebrate another fantastic success thanks again to the "team" which now includes John Andrew as Airshow Organiser. Clive Barron can still take full credit for booking the display aircraft and continues to come up with something new each year. It was particularly fitting that on this anniversary celebration year he was successful in persuading British Aerospace to kindly allow the DH60 Moth G-EBLV to make another welcome return to the Lancashire Aero Club. On a sadder note the Vulcan XH558 made its last appearance at the Manchester Airshow before its retirement.

In the tower, Tony and Paul have now been joined by Tony's lovely wife Lesley who is also a qualified Air Traffic Controller. The split second

timetable is still of primary importance to this team of perfectionists and woe betide any pilot who dares to even think of being late.

Of course it will not be long before we can start thinking about what is going to appear at the next Manchester Airshow, but that will have to be another story.

As it was in the beginning - de Havilland DH 60 Moth - G-EBLV.

By Paul Tomlin

Aviation history is liberally sprinkled with many notable events, some more memorable than others. If for example you were to ask today's aviating fraternity about the 'Lympne Trials' of 1923/24, don't be surprised if, at the end of a very short conversation, you are asked if anyone was found guilty and if they were hung! Yet it may be stated that the Lympne Trials were to change the history of light aviation in this country, and ultimately bring about the aero club movement we know today.

The aeroplane had, of necessity, developed rapidly during the period dominated by World War One. The lumbering bombers and sprightly fighters were products of a nation's wartime design efforts. With the on-set of peace, the *Daily Mail*, so often a champion of all things aeronautical, sponsored the Lympne Trials in 1923 aimed at developing a low-powered, single-seat light aircraft suitable for private flying.

Later that year the Director of Civil Aviation, Sir Sefton Brancker, was asked to organise another trial for the following year, with the stated goal of bringing about the development of a two-seat aeroplane suitable for instructional and club use. It was envisaged that the winning design would be ordered in quantity by the Air Ministry and supplied to Britain's fledgeling aero clubs, with the aim of stimulating a wider interest in aviation and at the same time creating a reserve of pilots for use in times of emergency.

The 1924 Trials did not produce a clear-cut winner. That the resulting machines proved unsuitable for the purpose they were intended for had not been the fault of the manufacturers. Large sums of money had been spent constructing aircraft to comply with the rules set by the Ministry's technical experts, only to conclude that the rules themselves were at fault: designers had been asked to produce a super-light, low powered 'Baby' aeroplane, instead of a sturdy, cheap training machine.

The Air Ministry 'Rules' for the 1924 Lympne Trials could not, in the opinion of Geoffrey de Havilland, produce the aircraft needed by Britain's aero clubs. With the experience of the DH.53 Humming Bird, designed for the 1923 single-seat

competition, being too light, and the DH.51, a two-seater biplane being too large and expensive, the de Havilland team came up with their own set of 'Rules'.

The engine was to be the key to the ultimate design. Designed by Major Frank Halford of the Aircraft Disposal Company, the DH.51's 120 hp power plant was halved and the cylinders were mounted on a new crankcase. Thus the 60 hp 'Cirrus' engine weighing 290 lbs, was born. The prototype DH.60 G-EBKT was test flown from Stag Lane on Sunday 22 February 1925 by Geoffrey de Havilland. The 'Moth' as it was to be known, a private de Havilland venture, which had not been allowed to enter the Air Ministry Trials because of its 'large' 60 hp engine, was soon showing signs of being embarrassingly successful.

In the end, the choice was left to Sir Sefton Brancker. The Director of Civil Aviation, well known for a directness totally out of character for a civil servant, made his decision : "It's no good talking like a lot of old women - what we've got to do is get on with the flying !" And so the Cirrus Moth was selected and Brancker's vision of a National Aero Club movement came into being. Sir Sefton ordered a total of ninety aircraft.

It was thus the summer of 1925 that witnessed the birth of the British flying club movement, with the first DH.60's being delivered to the Lancashire Aero Club; to be followed later by the London, Newcastle, Midland and Yorkshire Aero Clubs, with Hampshire joining the original five in 1926

The early history of G-EBLV is difficult to piece together fully as all engine, airframe and journey log books were lost at the start of the Second World War. What is known is that 'LV' was delivered to the Lancashire Aero Club at Woodford on Saturday 29 August 1925. Flown by Alan Cobham, G-EBLV left Stag Lane at 1130 hrs; called in at Coventry at 1240hrs for a short business meeting, and eventually arrived at Woodford at 1500hrs where it joined forces with the first Moth to give joy rides to the assembled dignitaries.

During the General Strike of 1926 when all communications ceased, G-EBLV was pressed into service flying the daily mail to Newcastle and Hull. In December 1927, the aircraft was sold to Lancashire Aero Club member, Jack Anderson. It was during a flight to the Lake District, with Mark Lacayo piloting, that the Moth overturned during a forced landing while crossing the northern Pennines in bad weather.

Repaired by the Club's engineer, G-EBLV was subsequently sold to fellow club member Ken Twemlow in July 1928, remaining at Woodford until September 1929 when ownership passed to Mr J.E.Cherney at Hawick, in Scotland. Mr M.W.Allenby became 'LV's new owner in November 1932, basing the aircraft at Eastbourne until August 1934. Commencing Spring 1936, Airwork Limited were registered owners for a very short period. Mr E.L.Donner was the Moth's owner from June 1936 to August 1937. It was during August that Richard Shuttleworth of the Warden

Aviation Company rescued 'LV from the top of a tree near Christchurch, and sold it for £185 to John Jefferson of Knowle.

In 1937 the de Havilland Aircraft Company began making enquiries as to the whereabouts of prototype Moth G-EBKT, in the hope that they could re-acquire the aircraft for preservation. Reports, however, suggested that the Moth may have been broken up for spares by the London Aero Club possibly as long ago as August 1927

John Jefferson, G-EBLV's owner then made de Havillands an offer they just could not refuse. The DH.60 was offered to the Company for the price he paid to Richard Shuttleworth. However there was to be a 'penalty clause' ; an additional £25, payable to the RAF Benevolent Fund, "for de Havilland's failing to preserve Moth G-EBKT." Both sums were duly paid and 'LV was returned to Hatfield in 1940 and placed into storage as the factory geared itself up for wartime production.

In 1950 George Hart, Chief Engineer of the London Aero Club based at nearby Panshanger was asked to restore the aircraft for static display. Not a person to do things by half, George Hart and his apprentice engineers excelled themselves: 'LV had not only been restored to her former glory within a period of three months, but had painstakingly been rebuilt to flying condition. Likewise the engine, a Cirrus 111 had been completely stripped and rebuilt at Stag Lane.

Today G-EBLV resides at Hatfield, with regular appearances at the Shuttleworth Air Pageants at Old Warden in Bedfordshire. The aircraft's movements are carefully controlled with the aim of conserving valuable engine and airframe hours. However with the recently announced closure of the British Aerospace Factory at Hatfield, it remains to be seen where the venerable old lady will take up residence in the future.

It was thanks to British Aerospace and in particular the personnel of the Hatfield and Woodford Flight Test Centre that G-EBLV was allowed to make a rare appearance away from the sheltered environs of Hertfordshire to journey north to celebrate the Lancashire Aero Club's 70th Anniversary, attending air shows at Woodford and the Club's post-war base at Barton.

Addenda

Almost at the time of going to press, I was handed a collection of photographs which had been presented to the Club by a Mr Bob Needham. Accompanying the pictures was a covering letter explaining that they were of the writer's parents Charles and Arline Needham, who had been very active members of the Club during the Woodford days. Quite a few snippets of interesting information appeared in the letter which screamed out for inclusion but at this late stage could not be apportioned to the relevant chapters.

In 1933 the Princess Royal inspected a Red Cross Parade at Belle Vue, Manchester. Included in the parade were Lancashire Aero Club members Arline Needham, Peggy Templeton and Joy Muntz. It was planned to provide an air ambulance service with an all-woman crew using the Club's Desoutter Monoplane and the trio appeared dressed in all-white flying suits, helmets and goggles. However the writer claims that his father had a very poor opinion of the aircraft's performance and he was instrumental in persuading the Committee to sell it before the Red Cross could put the idea to the test.

In the same year Charles Needham crashed and burnt out an AVRO Avian at Barton, fortunately without serious injury. (presumably G-EBQL) The writer stated that the whole family were prejudiced against Barton but he failed to specify whether this was before or after his father's accident.

Apparently Charles and Arline regularly flew to Abersoch at the weekend in an AVRO Avian and landed on the beach. That is, until the RAF Station Commander at Penrhos near Pwllheli put a stop to their landings during the Munich crisis of September 1938.

Most remarkable was the fact that Charles took the Club's Hornet Moth to Germany on a trip as late as August 1939. The aircraft was subsequently requisitioned for military service and as no other details are given, it must be assumed that the aircraft was able to leave without incident. The reason for the trip is not given or whether Arline accompanied him.

We do not know whether Charles took up flying again after the War but we do know that he maintained contact with the Woodford Old Associates who held annual re-unions. In fact he was responsible for organising the 1954 dinner at the Macclesfield Arms Hotel on December 10th, under the Chairmanship of Sir Roy Dobson CBE. JP: FRAeS. A menu card, which was kept as a momento, carries several faded autographs including those of John F. Leeming, Joe Scholes, Jack Cantrill, 'Toffee Hall', Basil Meads, Eric Lord and the famous AVRO pair Roy Chadwick and 'Dobbo'.

I also came across a delightful little article which appeared in the *Manchester Evening News* on 11th May 1970 concerning Winifred Brown who of course later became Mrs Winifred Adams :-

Miss Brown, a Manchester butcher's daughter who had just won the King's Cup air-race, was paid by this newspaper to do two loops and a spin over every pier in Lancashire and North Wales as an attraction for holiday-makers.

Sometimes she would fly in bad weather and then the editor Sir William Haley, always sent her a telegram of thanks and congratulation.

"He was marvellous to work for," she said. "He told me it couldn't have gone off better - 'all

Lancashire and North Wales are eating their fish and chips off your picture.' "

Quite a girl was Miss Brown, who became Mrs Ronald Adams. That same year, 1930, she was invited to the London Press Club's "Woman of the Year" dinner. Not wanting to sound conceited by announcing her arrival, she spent half an hour in the bar with her fiance before realising dinner was being kept back for her.

Then as an antidote to 'dreary' speeches by other guests, she told of the Manchester newspaper man who on a visit to London, took his small son to see Fleet Street.

"This, my son, is the hive of industry" said the man. "Here, everything is done on a colossal scale. It is the home of giants."

"Yes father" said the boy. "I've noticed that."

The father, pleased and proud of his son's intelligence, said: "Tell me, my son, just how you noticed."

"Well," said the boy, "I saw their toilet rolls arriving on a lorry."

STOP PRESS

BARTON AERODROME UNDER THREAT !

In April 1991, Salford City Council in their 'Salford Unitary Development Plan' proposed that the land on which Barton Aerodrome stands should be designated Industrial Land and should be developed as a High Tech Business Park or Shopping Complex. This would obviously mean the end of Barton as an airfield and as no other site would be available, would probably mean the end of the Lancashire Aero Club as an active flying club. It would also mean yet another Industrial Estate in what is already a heavily industrialised area and another open space would be gone forever.

Committee member John Andrew took on the responsibility for mounting a protest campaign and circulated all members of the Club urging them and local residents to write to the Council insisting that Barton Aerodrome be designated as Recreational Land. Information was also circulated via A.O.P.A. (The Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association) and the P.F.A. to lend support against the closure of yet another airfield in this country.

Officers of Salford City Council were invited to a tour of Barton hosted by the Club Chairman, Cliff Mort who presented the case put forward by the Club for the continued use of the land as an airfield. Not least in the reasons was the fact that more than 40 people are gainfully employed as a result of the Club's activities.

On the 20th June 1992, the *Manchester Evening News* carried a report that Salford City Council had

in fact decided to scrap their proposals. It transpired that nearly 400 objections had been received from various organisations and individuals including M.P.s and Euro M.P.s. John was quoted as follows :- "Every pilot in Britain knows Barton Airport, as it is a popular stopping off place between the North and the South. All the pilots we spoke to were appalled at the Council's plans."

It seemed that Manchester's first airport had been saved from the bulldozers. Barton is an important recreational, tourist, training, and business facility which is unique in this area. To have lost Barton would have been to have lost a very valuable asset. The members, many of whom give up all other pursuits in order to be able to enjoy their chosen hobby, were looking forward to continued flying at Barton. So too, the many visitors who come to enjoy watching the aeroplanes coming and going, also the many school parties who regularly come on educational trips. On the Club's Seventieth Anniversary it seemed the celebrations could be enjoyed without fear or trepidation.

However even at this late stage the airfield landlord, Manchester City Estates dropped another bombshell on the Committee, who were still trying to conclude the protracted negotiations on the airfield lease. A meeting of the members was called, where the landlord's requirements were formally announced.

To go over each and every detail would be very tedious; suffice it to say that the members felt that the demands were too great and would be impossible to meet. The negotiators were instructed therefore to contact the City Estates Department again, with a view to reconsidering their requests.

In view of the uncertainty, the Committee very reluctantly, felt that the 1993 Manchester Airshow would have to be cancelled. The decision attracted a considerable amount of media attention and it was hoped that the support voiced by the public might have some influence on the landlord's future decisions.

At the time of going to press, the negotiations were still proceeding and the Committee announced that a meeting of all members would be called as soon as possible after the next phase of negotiations. Naturally this leaves the Club in yet another precarious position. To sit back and think that it will somehow get over yet another hurdle without a considerable amount of hard work by all concerned would be foolhardy.

In the words of Edward Pape when he was instructing at Barton :-

"When the weather is not fit for flying, Barton can be one of the most depressing places. But when the weather is fine and the aeroplanes are flying I cannot imagine there being a better place."

Let us hope that a conclusion can be reached which is satisfactory to both parties. In my introduction I said that to many people, Lancashire Aero Club and Barton Aerodrome are synonymous.

To contemplate the two being separated is unbearable. This book was written as a celebration of the Club's achievements, I sincerely hope it is not now going to be its obituary.

So there we have it - "THE LANCASHIRE AERO CLUB".

When I first joined the Club I must confess I did not realise I was joining such an historic organisation. My sole pre-occupation at that time was learning to fly. Since then the Club has become very special to me not only because of its long, fascinating and distinguished history but because of the very fact that I did indeed learn to fly. If the reader will allow me just one more bout of self-indulgence I will try to explain.

I suffer from a condition known as Achondroplasia which has left me with very short limbs. With my legs being so short, reaching the rudder pedals proved to be an almost impossibility.

Ever since childhood I have had a passionate interest in aviation and as I passed into my early teens, the number of visits which I made to Ringway increased. I became more proficient at recognising the different types of aircraft and addicted to the idea of making a record of each aircraft I had seen, in the same way as train spotters do. I then began to travel to other airfields all over the country and in fact there are now very few airfields which I have not visited at some time or other.

In the late sixties the Popular Flying Association started to organise its annual rallies at Sywell which became an ideal event for aircraft spotters to attend. On the first weekend in July we would make our annual pilgrimage to what was fast becoming the event of the year in light aviation. I became very friendly with the Chairman of the P.F.A., a jovial bearded gentleman by the name of David Faulkner-Bryant who was to leave a long lasting impression on me.

One evening he asked me why I travelled so far to look at, record and photograph the visiting aircraft without any specific objective in mind. "Why don't you learn to fly ?" "Do you enjoy flying?" I answered the second question in the affirmative but went on to explain that I would never be able to afford this rich man's sport and besides, because of my size, I would never be able to reach the confounded rudder pedals which were built for the average sized giant !

He replied by saying that if I was determined enough to want to learn to fly, I would somehow find sufficient funds and also a way to reach those pedals. Suffice it to say that I saved hard enough and long enough to eventually go along to the Lancashire Aero Club with Faulkner-Bryant's words echoing in my ears and said "I want to learn to fly."

After explaining my predicament I was told that I could go and help myself to the nearest available Cessna 152 and experiment with the seats. No matter how far forward the seat came, I still could not reach the pedals, so I went home feeling disheartened but not beat.

My next approach was to a flying school at Manchester Airport, whose fleet consisted of Piper PA-38 Tomahawks, thinking that perhaps a different aircraft might be the solution. I went so far as to book a trial lesson and at the appointed time an instructor took me out to the aeroplane. To say that his understanding of the problem was non-existent would have been an understatement. My feet remained inches short of even touching the pedals and whilst I pleaded that more cushions might help, his only solution with a totally dismissive attitude, was to suggest that I should forget the idea and take up another hobby.

In retrospect this was probably the best thing that could have happened to me. This unhelpful soul had given me just the sort of incentive which I needed to press on and prove him wrong.

Back I went to Barton and discussed the matter this time with the Chief Flying Instructor, Don Graham. It was Don who realised that the first Cessna 152 which I tried had sliding seats, whereas some of the later models also had a wind-up device which brought the seats even closer to the pedals. He also suggested that if I had a pair of "Gary Glitter" type platform boots they might help.

My old 4 inch platforms, which were no longer in fashion, were retrieved from my wardrobe and a taxi-ing detail was duly arranged. The instructor delegated to resolve the problem was Martin Rushbrooke who, with the patience of a Saint, spent some considerable time with me as we experimented with the position of seats and cushions until we were satisfied that I could kick full rudder.

With the first major hurdle crossed I was then able to start the long haul in pursuit of the pilot's licence which I finally completed 12 months later. Only those fortunate enough to have ever learned to fly can possibly understand the thrill of going on their first "Solo"; of the driving ambition, which once bitten by the bug, keeps the student pilot pressing on until they qualify for the Pilot's Licence; of the exuberence felt when finally qualified, the Pilot is allowed to wear his or her "Wings" with pride.

It was the Lancashire Aero Club which helped me achieve my greatest ambition which is why the Club is so special to me. I will always therefore owe a debt of gratitude to Don Graham for listening to me and not dismissing my very serious request.

To Martin Rushbrooke who helped me on that taxi-ing detail but never forgot my problem and in latter days, recalled having read about clip-on pedal extensions, which I was subsequently able to obtain from the Cessna Aircraft Company. At this point I must explain that Martin, who is a gentleman through-and-through, is now the longest serving and most highly respected instructor at

Barton. He first joined the Club as a pupil on a flying scholarship in 1966 and only heaven knows how many student pilots he has trained or helped in his flying career.

To Roy Byway, who took me through the major part of my training; who was so much fun to fly with and was a first class instructor and who now flies Boeing 757's for Air 2000.

To the late Brian Harbit, who as Chairman of the Club and upon learning of the pedal extensions, instructed that the Club would pay for them on my behalf. Who also, having completed his term of office as Chairman, was to step in again to fill the breach when the Club found itself in yet more difficulties.

To Edward Pape who became C.F.I. in the mid-eighties and gave me all sorts of help and encouragement; who fell in love with and married one of his students (the very lovely Diane) and who went on to run his own flying school in partnership with Brian Harbit.

To Peter Underhill, who first invited me onto the Airshow commentary team; who was a very professional commentator, who was so enthusiastic about his flying and was so much fun to be with, either in the air or in the Clubhouse. His move away from the Barton area was a sad loss to the Club.

To Clive Barron who invited me back onto the Airshow commentary team after I had been out of the fray for quite a few years and to Paul Bennison who is now the Chief Commentator, who I greatly respect for his knowledge and professionalism.

To Paul Connatty has helped me so much when working in the Control Tower as the radio operator.

To our present Chairman, Cliff Mort who has always been a great friend and confidant. Who readily admits that he hates public speaking but is always ready to overcome his dislike in the interests of the Club.

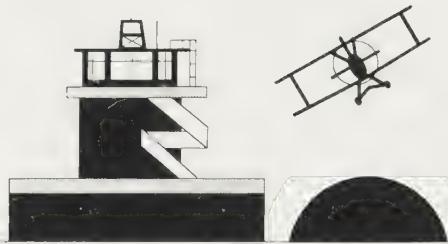
To our very dear President, Tom Dugdale, who although he does not realise it, gave me encouragement with this project when I needed it most.

Finally, to my dear wife Sheila, who I would never have met, had it not been for the Club.

The list could go on, but again I must curtail my sentiments or this book will never be finished. I am certain that there are hundreds more stories which remain untold and as many names worthy of mention. In the words of the Club President, L.D.Birkett when he wrote about the members who had served in the armed forces, "My sincere apologies are offered to any who might be slighted by inaccuracies or omissions, but the difficulties of an amateur historian are legion."

I would hope to continue researching and publish any more findings in the *Elevator*. If any person can help me in this respect, their offerings will be gratefully received.

The Lancashire Aero Club is not only about flying, it is also about people.
People may come and go, and some will leave a greater mark on the Club's development than others.
Let us hope that flying will always remain, especially at Barton.
The final debt of gratitude is owed by all the members of the Club to the founders, **John Leeming**,
Tom Prince and **Clement Wood** without whom this great Club would never have been born.
Long live the **LANCASHIRE AERO CLUB** !



 **BARTON** 
THE GRASS ROOTS
OF NORTH WEST AVIATION

LANCASHIRE AERO CLUB

CLUB PRESIDENTS

Lord Charles C. Wakefield of Hythe

Sir Kenneth Crossley

Air Commodore A. V. Harvey C.B.E. M.P.

John F. Leeming

Fred Dunkerley

Dennis L. Armitage D.F.C.

L.D. Birkett A.F.C.

Basil A.G. Meads M.B.E.

A.T. Dugdale D.F.C. J.P.

CLUB CHAIRMEN

J.F. Leeming	A. Goodfellow
P. Eckersley	R.E.H. Caldecott
B.A.G. Meads	D.L. Armitage
L.D. Birkett	F. Dunkerley
R.B. Stockfis	J.Y. Simpson
R.L. Owen	J. Hill
J.Y. Simpson	F. Scragg
G. Kattan	A.T. Hodge
S. Worth	N.V. Jeeves
W. Pickersgill	J. Jackson
J.A.W. Clowes	P.M. Bowden
J. Tilzey	P. Bennison
B. Harbit	R. Zukowski
I. Jennison	I. Smith
M. Cowburn	K. Armstrong
C. Mort	

LANCASHIRE AERO CLUB

PEMBERTON TROPHY WINNERS

Oct/1928	P.F. Hall	Jan/1929	P.F. Hall
Apr/1929	K. Twemlow	Jul/1929	M. Lacayo
Oct/1929	K. Twemlow	Jan/1930	B.A.G.Meads
Apr/1930	R.F. Hall	Sep/1930	J.C. Garner
Dec/1930	J.C. Garner	Mar/1931	V.F. Crosthwaite
Jun/1931	A.C. Mills	Joint Winners	F.R. Uddy
Jan/1932	W.R.P.Templeton	Sep/1931	J.C. Lister
Aug/1932	P.G. Hunter	May/1932	P. Broome
Apr/1933	C.M. Needham	Jan/1933	G.V. Oddy
Dec/1933	A.C. Gregory	Sep/1933	D. Gibson
Sep/1934	E. O'Donnell	Apr/1934	G. Hallam
Apr/1935	P.M. Brothers	Dec/1934	E. O'Donnell
Sep/1936	D.L. Armitage	Jul/1936	D.L. Armitage
Apr/1937	C.C. McCracken	Dec/1936	C.C. McCracken
Feb/1938	A.M. Pringle	Sep/1937	A.L. Ward
Nov/1947	R.B. Stockfis	Sep/1938	Miss E.B.Picton
Jul/1948	R.B. Stockfis	Mar/1948	K. Moss
Feb/1949	B.W. Boor	Oct/1948	A.A. Orsi
Oct/1949	B.W. Boor	Apr/1949	B.W. Boor
Nov/1950	H.A. Line	Mar/1950	R.N. Sidebotham
Sep/1951	G. Collingwood	May/1951	C. Duncan
Oct/1952	R.N. Sidebotham	Jun/1952	J. Hill
Aug/1953	W.E. Parker	Apr/1953	S. Bradbury
Sep/1954	B. Hamblett	Mar/1954	W.E. Parker
Sep/1956	G.A. Gamble	Apr/1956	F. Fairclough
Sep/1957	H. Burrows	May/1957	F. Fairclough
Sep/1958	H. Burrows	Apr/1958	H. Burrows
Sep/1959	T.P. Whitmore	May/1959	D.H. Geard
Oct/1961	V. Williams	Jun/1960	J.B. Roe
Sep/1962	E. Hooson	Apr/1962	M.A. Hakeem
Sep/1964	M.G.F.Morton	Apr/1963	J.A. Weinholt
Apr/1967	W.M. Pepper	Sep/1966	J.Saunders-Hughes
Apr/1968	W.M. Pepper	Oct/1967	R.B. Wrigley
May/1969	H.A. Blomiley	Oct/1968	R.J. Kershaw
May/1971	P.R. Heald	Apr/1970	P.R. Skeels
May/1974	D.A. Newton	Jul/1972	T.P. Dennis
Sep/1976	J. Stephens	May/1975	C.A. Hodges
May/1978	A. Luty	May/1977	C.A. Hodges
Sep/1980	J.R. Ahmed	Oct/1979	R. Finlay
Aug/1983	D.W. Mullin	Jul/1982	E.C. Mort
Oct/1985	D.J. Runciman	Sep/1984	P. Maher
Sep/1987	A.M. Fitton	Nov/1986	A.W. Donegan
Sep/1989	Ruth Simpson	Oct/1988	A. Reay
Oct/1991	Kate Howe	Jun/1990	P. Derbyshire

LANCASHIRE AERO CLUB

RODMAN TROPHY WINNERS

/1926	H.R.D.Waghorn	/1928	Miss W.S. Brown
/1930	A. Goodfellow	Mar/1931	A. Goodfellow
Jun/1931	A. Goodfellow	Sep/1931	A. Goodfellow
Jan/1932	M.A. Lacayo	May/1932	R.F. Hall
Sep/1932	J. Grundy	Jan/1933	C.H. Wilson
May/1933	R.F. Hall	Sep/1933	A. Collinge
Dec/1933	R.F. Hall	Apr/1934	A. Goodfellow
Sep/1934	A. Goodfellow	Dec/1934	J.F. Hooson
Apr/1935	A. Goodfellow	Jul/1936	G.V. Oddy
Dec/1936	C.S. Robinson	Apr/1937	Sir Kenneth Crossley Bart
Sep/1937	F/Lt R.T.Gething	Feb/1938	F/Lt R.T.Gething
May/1938	D.L. Armitage	Sep/1938	D.L. Armitage
Sep/1947	P.A. Ripon	Mar/1948	P.J. Jefferies
Apr/1948	F. Dunkerley	Oct/1948	D.L. Armitage
Apr/1949	J.J. McCormick	Oct/1949	C.E. Kitchen
Mar/1950	R. Stockfis	Nov/1950	L. Hislop
Sep/1951	F. Dunkerley	Mar/1952	K. Stockfis
Sep/1952	R. Stockfis	Mar/1953	K. Stockfis
Aug/1953	K. Stockfis	Mar/1954	S. Gillaspy
Sep/1954	F. Mosedale	May/1955	R. Stockfis
Jun/1956	K. Stockfis	Sep/1956	J. Hill
May/1957	N. Bradpiece	Sep/1957	J.A. Powers
Apr/1958	F. Emery	Sep/1958	R. Stockfis
May/1959	N.H. Taylor	Sep/1959	J.A. Powers
Jun/1960	A.T. Hodge	Apr/1962	B. Hampson
Sep/1962	J.A. Powers	Apr/1964	D.C. Stephens
Oct/1965	D.C. Stephens	Apr/1966	D.L. Antrobus
Sep/1966	J.A. Weinholt	Apr/1967	P.J. McCabe
Oct/1967	J.A. Weinholt	Apr/1968	R.E. Nixon
Oct/1968	S. Whillance	May/1969	V. Roberts
May/1970	V. Roberts	May/1971	A. Johnson
Jun/1972	A. Johnson	May/1974	A.P. Wiseman
May/1975	S.E. Collinson	Oct/1975	S.E. Collinson
Jul/1977	P.M. Bowden	May/1978	B.J. McKeever
Sep/1979	H. Howells	Sep/1980	S.T. Woods
Jul/1982	N.M. Broderick	Sep/1983	J. Pilkington
Sep/1984	B. Driscoll	Sep/1985	P.W. Thomas
Nov/1986	R. Finlay	Nov/1987	R. Jones
Oct/1988	G. Dodd	Sep/1989	R. Finlay
Jun/1990	A. Reay	Oct/1991	S. Todd

Lancashire Aero Club-Fleet List

G-EBLR	de Havilland DH 60 Moth	Presented by Air Ministry Delivered by A.J.Cobham 21/7/1925 Crashed Hale Cheshire 12/6/1927
G-EBLV	de Havilland DH 60 Moth	Presented by Air Ministry Delivered by A.J.Cobham 29/8/1925 Owned by J.E.Glenny by 1929 Sold to Mr. Jefferon Aug.1938 Crashed 5/2/1939 Restored 5/9/1961 Current-British Aerospace/Hatfield
G-EBMQ	de Havilland DH 60 Moth	Presented by Club President, Sir Charles Wakefield - Feb.1926 Sold to Sydney Crabtree at Woodford Feb.1934 Withdrawn from use Aug.1934
G-EBNF	Avro Gosport	Presented by Avro 16/4/1926 Returned to Avro Sept.1927 Crashed Cheadle Hulme, Cheshire 21/10/1928
G-EBQL	Avro Avian	Presented by Avro Nov.1927 Crashed Barton 18/11/1933
G-EBRR	Avro Avian	Acquired July 1927 W/O Week-ending 14/7/1928
G-EBSD	Avro Avian	Acquired Circa 1927 Cancelled Dec.1932
G-EBTY	Avro Avian	Acquired Dec.1938 Sold to H.V.Armstrong July 1939 Impressed 20/12/1939
G-EBVZ	Avro Avian	Acquired by Miss W.S.Brown Feb.1928 Sold to Sir Ralph Hare Feb.1934 Crashed Scarcliffe,Derbyshire 19/5/1934
G-EBXD	Avro Avian	Acquired Oct.1928 Sold to R.G.Davies at Woodford April 1936 Cancelled Dec.1937
G-AABX	Avro Avian	Acquired by P.T.Eckersley Nov.1937 Moved from Barton to Woodford Sold to H.V.Armstrong July 1939 Impressed 17/2/1940
G-AAEC	Avro Avian	Acquired Feb.1929 Sold to Greenhalgh & Dickinson at Speke Dec.1936 Impressed Dec.1939
G-AAWI	Avro Avian Sports	Acquired May 1930 Sold Dec.1935
G-ABCO	Avro Avian	Acquired July 1931 by C.H.Wilson at Woodford. Sold to R.N.Birley at Woodford. Crashed Dec.1937
G-ABEE	Avro Avian Sports	Acquired May 1931 by R.H.Dobson at Woodford. Sold to A.Vorsanger at Woodford. Sold June 1934

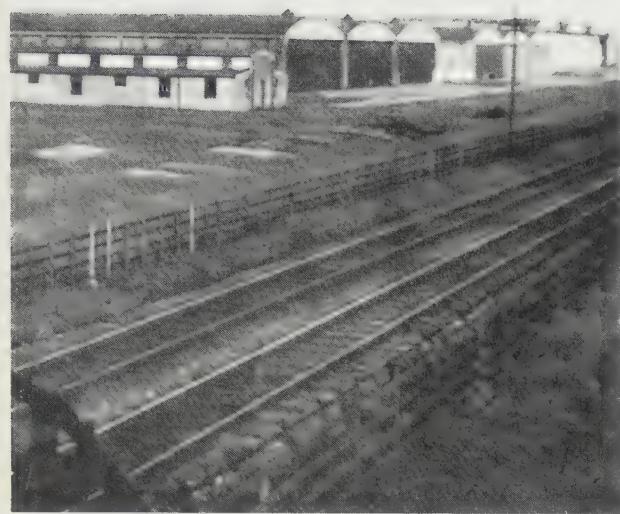
G-ABRN	Desoutter Monoplane	Moved from Barton to Woodford 2/12/1932 Sold to S/Ldr J.R.Jones Sept.1939 Cancelled Dec.1946
G-ABVU	Avro Cadet	Acquired Sept.1938 Scrapped Barton May 1951
G-ABYC	Avro Cadet	Acquired Aug.1938 Scrapped Barton May 1951
G-ACMG	Avro Cadet	Acquired Aug.1938 Scrapped Barton May 1951
G-ACUF	Klemm Swallow	Owned by Club Chairman, Peter Eckersley-Circa 1938 Sold to F.L.Gates March 1940
G-ADKU	de Havilland Hornet Moth	Owned by Club Chairman, Peter Eckersley-Circa 1939 Impressed 21/2/1940
G-ADMJ	de Havilland Hornet Moth	Acquired Circa 1938 Impressed 28/2/1940
G-AFJX	Miles Whitney Straight	Acquired by J.Tweedale at Woodford 12/7/1939 Impressed 1/8/1940
G-AFPG	de Havilland Moth Minor	Acquired 26/6/1939 Impressed 18/8/1940
G-AFPH	de Havilland Moth Minor	Acquired 1/7/1939 Impressed 31/1/1940
G-AFSJ	de Havilland Tiger Moth	Acquired Sept.1951 Crashed Padgate 26/6/1955
G-AGVL	Auster Autocrat	Acquired April 1956 Sold by 1964 Crashed Panshangar 22/1/1967
G-AHHB	Taylorcraft Plus D	Acquired May 1946 Sold to Manchester Aircraft Services July 1952 Sold in Belgium 1959
G-AHHX	Taylorcraft Plus D	Acquired May 1946 Sold to Manchester Aircraft Services Sept.1952 Sold in W.Germany 4/10/1956
G-AHYH	Taylorcraft Plus D	Acquired May 1946 Sold to Sivewright A/Ws May 1949 Sold in Rhodesia 5/10/1958
G-AHNC	de Havilland Tiger Moth	Acquired Dec.1947 Sold by 1964 WFU Jan.1965
G-AIPN	Auster 5	Acquired by N.D.Roughsedge Feb.1950 at Barton Sold to P.Parry Oct.1950 at Barton Sold in France 13/2/1952
G-AJIH	Auster Autocrat	Acquired Circa 1964 Sold Circa 1969 Now Based in N.Ireland

G-AJIW	Auster Autocrat	Acquired by S.Anderton at Barton July 1953 Sold-? On Rebuild at Cranfield
G-AJRC	Auster Autocrat	Circa 1961
G-AKWZ	de Havilland Tiger Moth	Acquired 13/10/1948 Scrapped Sept.1949
G-AKXA	de Havilland Tiger Moth	Acquired Circa 1948 Crashed Barton 8/10/1949
G-ANEE	de Havilland Tiger Moth	Acquired Oct.1953 Sold in Eire 1964
G-ANEF	de Havilland Tiger Moth	Acquired Oct.1953 Sold Circa 1964 Still current at RAF Cranwell
G-ARFD	Pa 22 Tri-Pacer	Acquired Circa 1961 Sold Circa 1963 Still current at Blackpool
G-ARHU	Pa 22 Caribbean	Acquired Circa 1961 Sold 1963 Still current
G-ARIU	Cessna 172	Circa 1963
G-ARJE	Pa 22 Colt	Acquired Circa 1961 Sold 1963 Still current/On Rebuild Wilmslow
G-ARJF	Pa 22 Colt	Acquired Circa 1967 Sold 1970
G-ARKT	Pa 22 Colt	Acquired 1963 Sold 1971
G-ARLW	Cessna 172	Acquired Circa 1966 Sold 1979 Damaged heavy landing 1990 Used as Spares for G-ARMR
G-ARNC	Pa 22 Colt	Acquired Circa 1961 Sold 1971 Sold in Eire 1977/ Canx 1979
G-ARND	Pa 22 Colt	Acquired Circa 1961 Sold 1971 Still current
G-AROB	Cessna 172	Acquired Circa 1961 Crashed Barton 25/4/1965
G-ASYL	Cessna 150	Acquired Circa 1968 Sold 1971
G-ATMB	Cessna 150	Acquired Circa 1979 Sold 1980 Crashed in Eire
G-AWPU	Cessna 150	Acquired Circa 1968 Still current at Barton
G-AXRZ	Cessna 150 Aerobat	Acquired Circa 1973 Crashed Flixton 11/10/74

G-AXVC	Cessna 150 Aerobat	Acquired Circa 1969 Sold 1979 Still current at Sibson
G-AXUY	Jodel Ambassadeur	Acquired Circa 1976 Sold Circa 1977 Crashed Cheshire 1978
G-AXWE	Cessna 150	Acquired Circa 1970 DBR Barton Circa 1980
G-AYGC	Cessna 150	Acquired Circa 1970 Sold 1979 Still current at Barton
G-BBTG	Cessna 172	Acquired Circa 1975 Sold 1980
G-BCVG	Cessna 150 Aerobat	Acquired Circa 1975 Sold 1980
G-BEHW	Cessna 150	Acquired Circa 1987 Sold 1989
G-BEUX	Cessna 172	Acquired Circa 1978 Still current at Barton
G-BFIG	Cessna 172	Circa 1978
G-BFRL	Cessna 152	Acquired 1978 Sold 1980
G-BGGA	Bellanca Citabria	Circa 1981
G-BGJA	Cessna 152	Acquired Circa 1979 Sold 1981
G-BHCX	Cessna 152	Acquired Circa 1979 Sold 1984 Damaged in Storms at Biggin Hill
G-BHRB	Cessna 152	Acquired Circa 1980 Sold 1990 Still current at Barton
G-BHUP	Cessna 152	Acquired Circa 1980 Sold 1989 Still current at Stapleford
G-BHXY	Piper Cub	Acquired Circa 1982 Sold 1983 Manchester Airshows/L.A.C.
G-BJXB	Slingsby T.67A	Acquired Circa 1982 Damaged
G-BJZN	Slingsby T.67A	Acquired Circa 1982 Sold - Still current at Barton
G-BLAC	Cessna 152 Aerobat	Acquired Circa 1980 Still current at Barton
G-BMVB	Cessna 152	Acquired Circa 1988 Sold 1990 Still current at Barton
G-BOPT	Grob G.115	Acquired Circa 1988 Still current at Barton

G-BOPU	Grob G.115	Acquired Circa 1986 Still current at Barton
G-LACA	Pa 28 Warrior	Acquired Circa 1990 Still current- Light Planes (Lancs)
G-LACB	Pa 28 Warrior	Acquired Circa 1990 Still Current- Light Planes (Lancs)

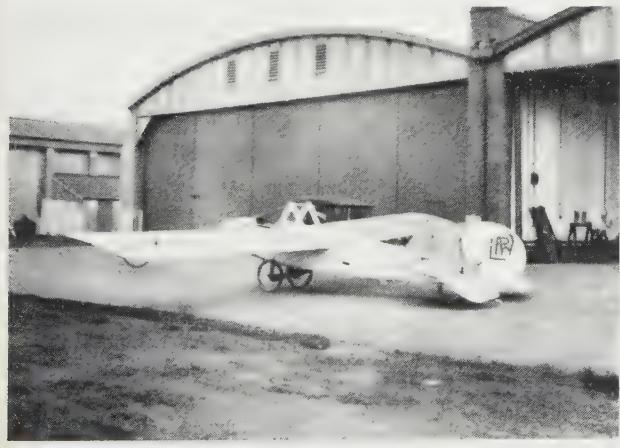
Some of the aircraft listed undoubtedly were privately owned but possibly made available for sub-leasing by the Club and subsequent hire by the members, hence their appearance in this list. In the early days at Woodford this may well have gone on between the Club and Avro's. Certainly Cierva Autogiro C30A G-ACXW was leased by the Club on a trial basis for six months, another contender was Avro Cadet G-ACGY.



1.



2.



3.



4.



5.

1. The hangars at Alexandra Park Aerodrome. (The area is now occupied by football pitches forming Hough End Playing Fields and the Greater Manchester Police Stables and Dog Training Centre.
[B.R.Robinson]
2. John Leeming working on the LPW in his greenhouse.
[J.F.Leeming]
3. The LPW outside the hangars at Alexandra Park Aerodrome.
[J.F.Leeming]
4. The LPW just before a flight. (Note the length of the grass !)
[J.F.Leeming]
5. John Leeming taking off in the LPW at Alexandra Park Aerodrome.
[B.A.G.Meads via B.R.Robinson]



6. The LPW (now with engine) being man-handled at Woodford, Leeming has hold of the propellor.
[P.Tomlin]
7. Starting the engine with Leeming at the controls.
[P.Tomlin]
8. G-EBLR - The Club's first DH.60 Moth, being brought out from the canvass hangar in anticipation of the arrival of the Club's second Moth.
[P.Tomlin]

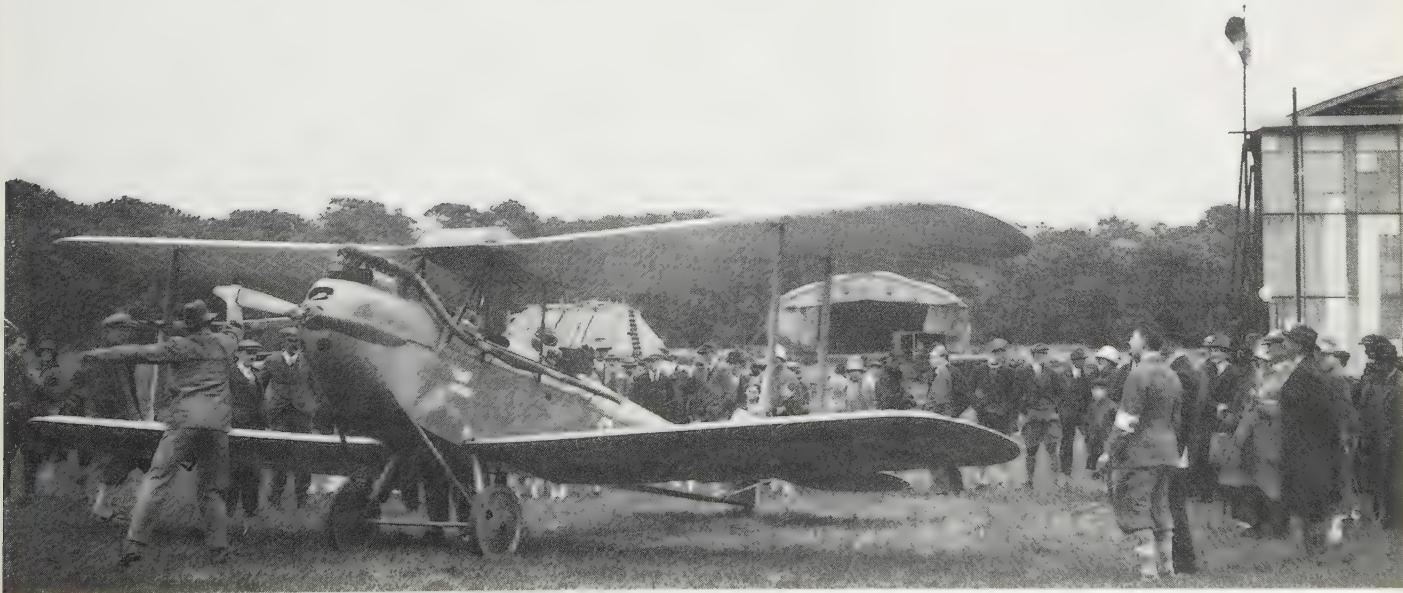




9.



10.



11.

9. The arrival of DH.60 - G-EBLV, the Club's second Moth at Woodford on 29th August 1925.
[P.Tomlin]
10. Alan Cobham disembarks from G-EBLV to be eagerly greeted by Leeming and other members.
[P.Tomlin]
11. G-EBLV being prepared for a flight at the ensuing display.
[P.Tomlin]



12. Alan Cobham inspects the LPW in the company of Leeming. (Note how fashionable it was then to be seen holding a cigarette !)
[P.Tomlin]

13. Woodford, November 1925, Forefront Left to Right : John Leeming, Sir William Letts (AVRO), Sir Samuel Hoare (Sec. of State for Air), Sir Sefton Brancker (Director of Civil Aviation), Sir Charles Wakefield (Castrol Oil and Lancashire Aero Club President).
[P.Tomlin]



14.



15.



16.

16. G-OMQ - Avro Avian - Presented to the Club by AVRO



17.

17. G-EBNF - Avro Avian - Presented to the Club by AVRO

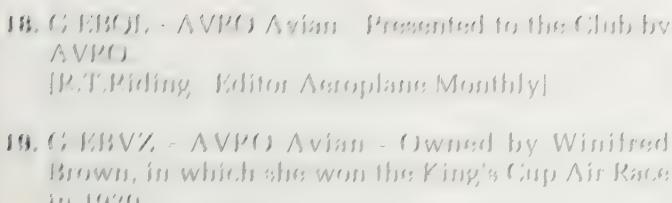


18.



19.

18. G-EBQJ - AVRO Avian - Presented to the Club by AVRO



19. G-EBVZ - AVRO Avian - Owned by Winifred Brown, in which she won the King's Cup Air Race in 1930

[R.T.Riding - Editor Aeroplane Monthly]

20. The Clubhouse at Woodford

[British Aerospace]

21. G-AABX - AVRO Avian - Owned by Peter Eckersley who became Chairman of the Club and also Captain of the Lancashire Cricket Club. In an old minute book his occupation was shown as 'Gentleman'

[R.T.Riding - Editor Aeroplane Monthly]



21.



23.

22. The Princess Royal inspects a Red Cross Parade at Belle Vue, Manchester. Seen here being presented to Club members, Left to Right, Peggy Templeton, Arline Needham and Joy Muntz.
[Allied Newspapers via R.Needham]



23. G-ABRN - Desoutter Monoplane - which was intended to be flown in conjunction with the Red Cross. Alan Goodfellow spoke quite favourably about the machine, however Charles Needham had a much lower opinion and persuaded the Committee to sell the machine before it could be put to the test.
[R.T.Riding - Editor Aeroplane Monthly]



24. G-ABVU - AVRO Cadet - Taken inside the large hangar at Barton, owned by the Club until it was requisitioned for war service. It was supposed to have been scrapped at Barton in 1951, however there is a suggestion that it was simply buried!

[R.T.Riding - Editor Aeroplane Monthly]



25. G-ABYC - AVRO Cadet - Same fate.

[R.T.Riding - Editor Aeroplane Monthly]

26. G-ACMG - AVRO Cadet - Same fate. (Note the Lancashire Rose on the tail.)

[R.T.Riding - Editor Aeroplane Monthly]



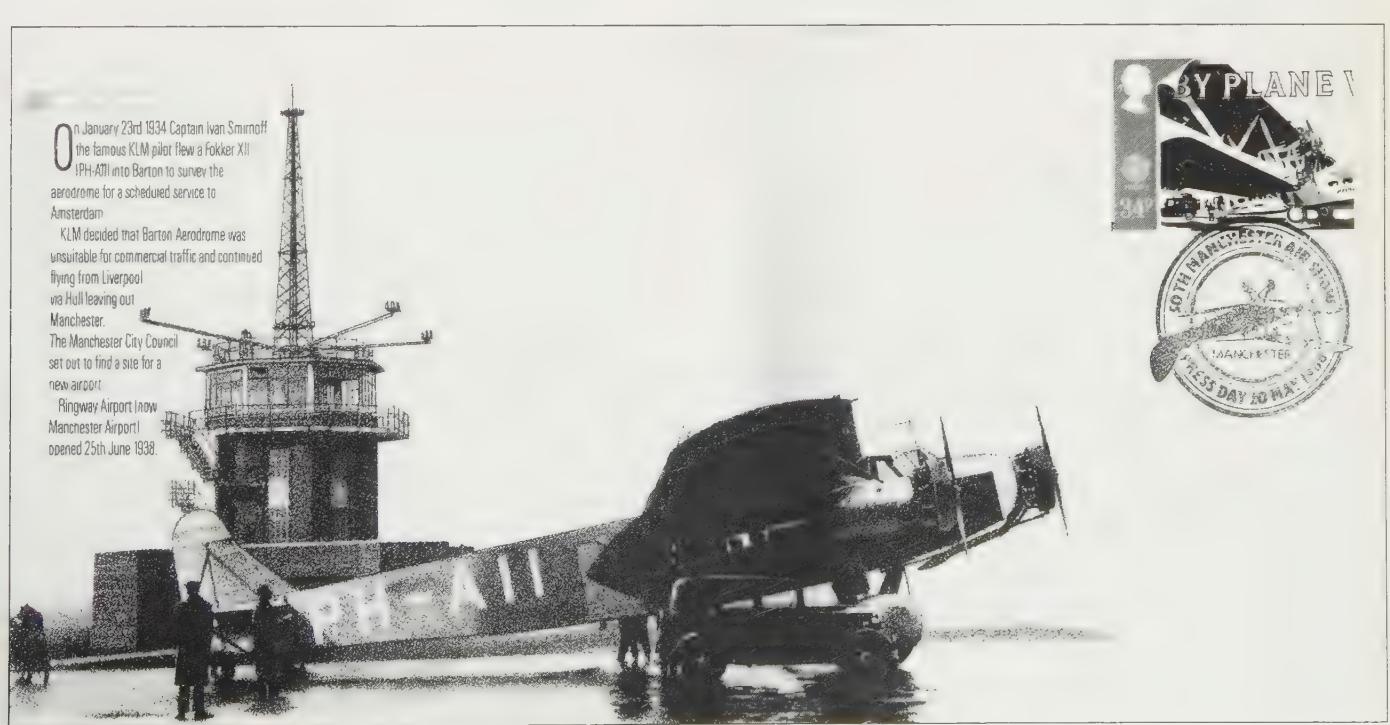
27.

27. G-ACUF - Klemm Swallow - Owned by Peter Eckersley, Club Chairman.
[R.T.Riding - Editor Aeroplane Monthly]



28.

28. G-ADMJ - de Havilland Hornet Moth. Presumably this was the machine which Charles Needham took to Germany in August 1939.
[R.T.Riding - Editor Aeroplane Monthly]



29.



30.



31.



32.

30. G-AEEU - Prototype Hillson Praga - was test flown at Barton, having arrived at the aerodrome on 24th May 1936. Seen here inside the large hangar at Barton.
[R.T.Riding - Editor Aeroplane Monthly]

31. G-AEPJ - Hillson Praga - In front of the Control Tower at Barton. (Note how the leading edge of the wing folded back to provide easier access to the cockpit.)
[R.T.Riding - Editor Aeroplane Monthly]

32. An early Barton scene on a summer's afternoon, taken from the North side of the Aerodrome.



33.



34.



35.



36.

33. G-AAXC - Handley Page HP42 - Imperial Airways, visiting Barton.

34. G-AFPG - de Havilland Moth Minor - (Note the Lancashire Rose on the tail)
[R.T.Riding - Editor Aeroplane Monthly]

35. G-AFSJ - de Havilland Tiger Moth.
[R.T.Riding - Editor Aeroplane Monthly]



37.

36. G-AHHX - Taylorcraft Plus D. This was the Club's post-war colour scheme of dark blue fuselage with red cheat-line.

[R.T.Riding - Editor Aeroplane Monthly]

37. No less than 5 DH.89a Dragon Rapides at Barton, having brought in owners, trainers and jockeys for a meeting at the old Manchester Race Course. (Presumably the famous Manchester November Handicap.)
[D.Ash]



38.

38. G-ADNL - Miles M.77 Sparrowjet - Owned by the Club's Chairman Fred Dunkerley. Seated at the controls can be seen 'Taffy' Davies. [D.Ash]

39. G-ADNL - Miles M.77 Sparrowjet - Seen here being manouevred into what was then the Club's only hangar. (Now used as the maintenance hangar.) [D.Ash]

40. G-AFJR - Tipsy Belfair - (Also visible is the old landing direction indicator. [Anon]



39.



40.



41.



42.



43.

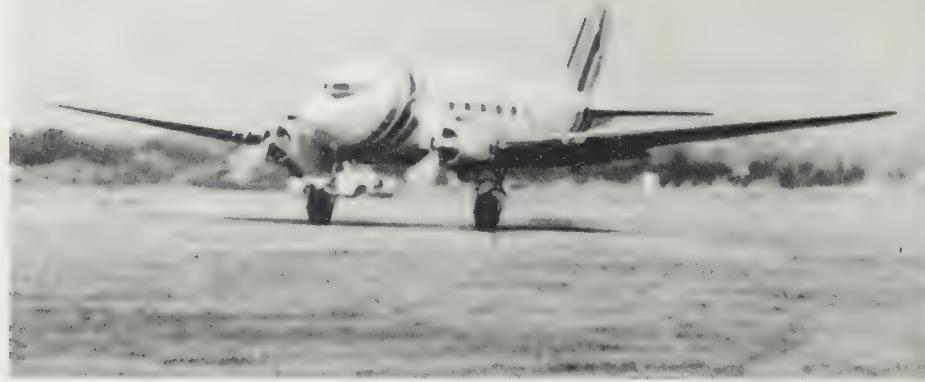
41. G-ANEE - de Havilland Tiger Moth - Seen here in the Club's colour scheme. This was affectionately known to the members as 'Annie'.
[J.Teece]

42. G-ARNC - Piper PA-22 Colt - Heralded the arrival of a new fleet.
[J.Teece]

43. G-ARFD - Piper PA-22 Tri-Pacer - Seen here re-visiting Barton in 1992.
[P.Maher]



48.



49.



50.

48. G-AKKB - Miles Gemini - which once belonged to Fred Dunkerley and appeared at the 1982 Airshow

49. G-AMPY - Douglas Dc3 - Air Atlantique, touching down on the numbers of runway 24 during the 1982 Airshow.

50. Junkers JU.52 - Appearing at the Press Day prior to the 1984 Manchester Airshow. (note the Gun-Turret on the upper fuselage)
[P.Maher]



51.



52.

51. G-FIRE - Spitfire Mk XIV. Press Day 1984.
[P.Maher]

52. Face-to-Face, The JU.52 and Spitfire.
[P.Maher]



5.3c



5.3d



5.3e

53. RR299 de Havilland Mosquito performs a 'Beat-up' of the airfield on the Saturday afternoon prior to the 1984 Airshow.
[S.Maher]



54.



55.



56.



57.

54. G-ABWP - Spartan Arrow - Owned by Club Member Ray Blain, this is the sole surviving example.
[P.Crellin]
55. G-BLAC - Cessna/Rheims FA.152 Aerobat - Flagship of the Club's Fleet of Cessnas in the 1980's. (Note the personalised registration G-BLAC = Lancashire Aero Club.)
[P.Maher]
56. G-BJXB - Slingsby T.67A - (Taken outside Hangar Number 3, which was named the Brian Harbit Hangar in memory of the Club's late Chairman.)
[P.Maher]
57. G-LACB - Piper PA-28 Warrior - Coming in over the fence to land on runway 27 at Barton.
[P.Maher]



58.



59.



60.

58. Club Chairman, Cliff Mort takes a nap inside a marquee at the P.F.A. Annual Rally at Cranfield.
[P.Crellin]

59. The large hangar at Barton. This has now been extensively refurbished by Mike Howell's Company, Telair. Sadly the large amount of work involved did not allow for the large lettering, 'BARTON - MANCHESTER' to be replaced. The easterly facing wall, which overlooks the A57 road still bears the coat-of-arms of the City of Manchester.
[P.Crellin]

60. G-EWUD - Cessna F.172 - Previously registered as G-ATBK, this was the machine stolen in exchange for the 'Toy-Town' money.
[P.Crellin]



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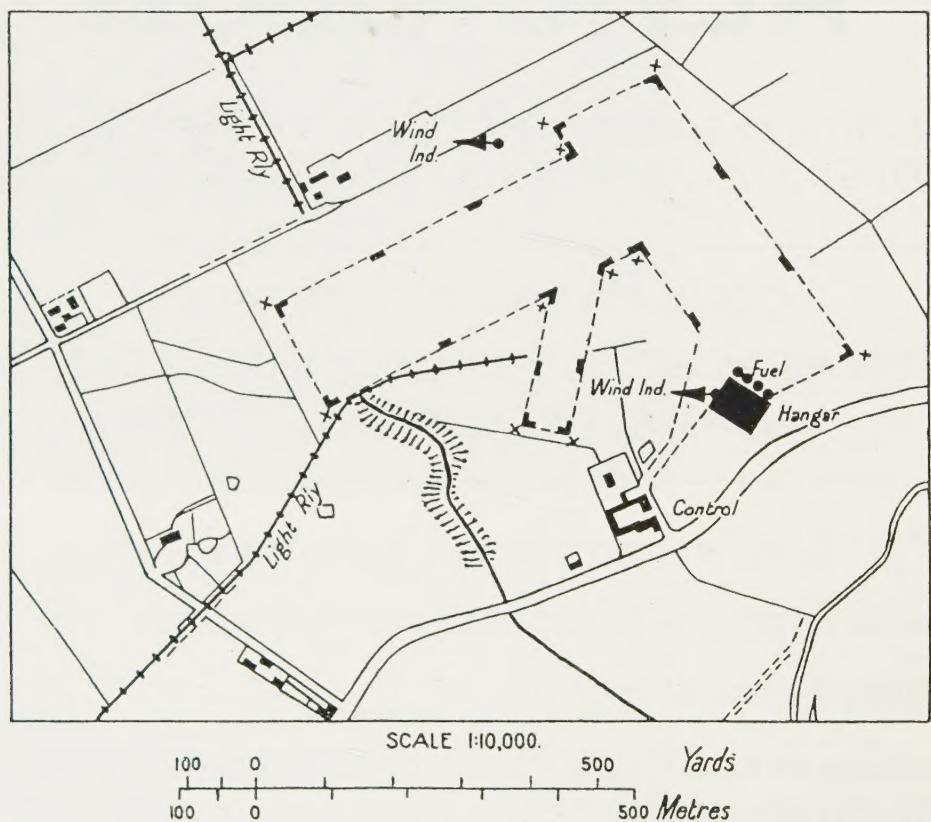
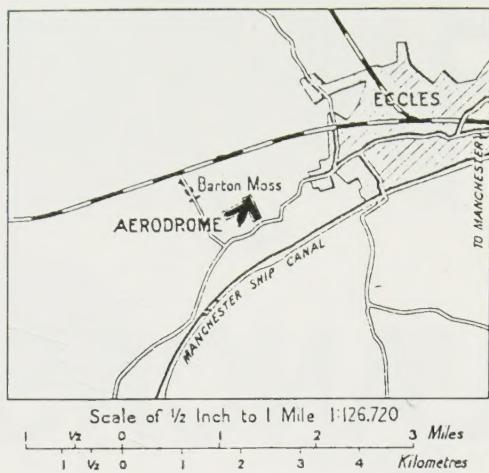
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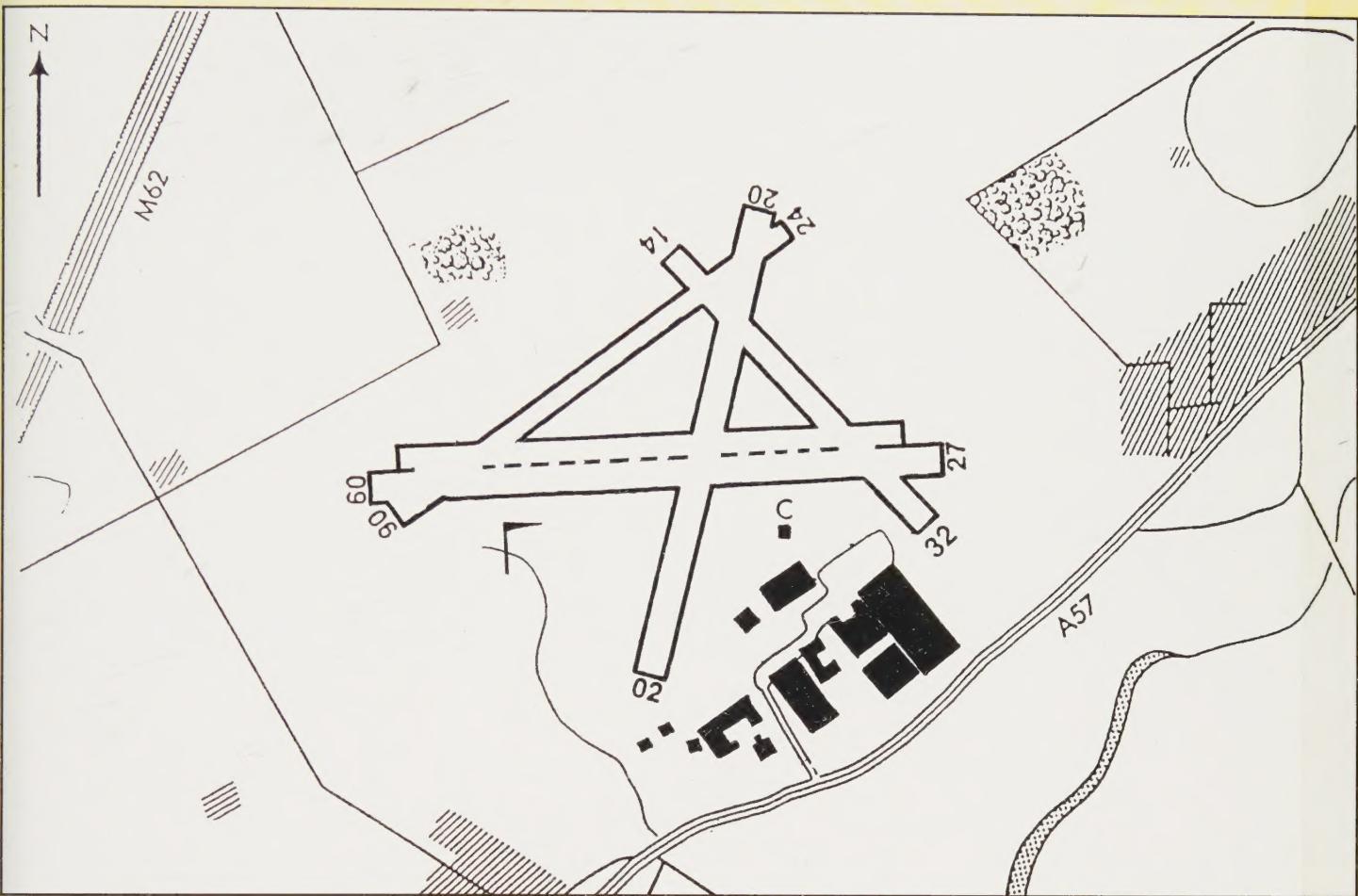
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- ★ A choice of aircraft type
- ★ No waiting or queuing for priority commercial aircraft
(which you would pay for at an International airport such as
Manchester)
- ★ **No landing fees**
- ★ A social club, which organises flying and social events for all
the family.
- ★ **We are open 7 days a week - all year round!**

MANCHESTER (BARTON) AERODROME - 1931



Barton Aerodrome



<u>RUNWAY</u>	<u>LENGTH</u>
02/20	530 m
06/24	410 m
09/27	626 m
09/27N	520 m
32/14	380 m

Elevation 73 feet asl
Radio Frequency 122.7,
Callsign 'Barton Radio'
Circuit Height 800 feet
All runways are grass



KQ-006-953